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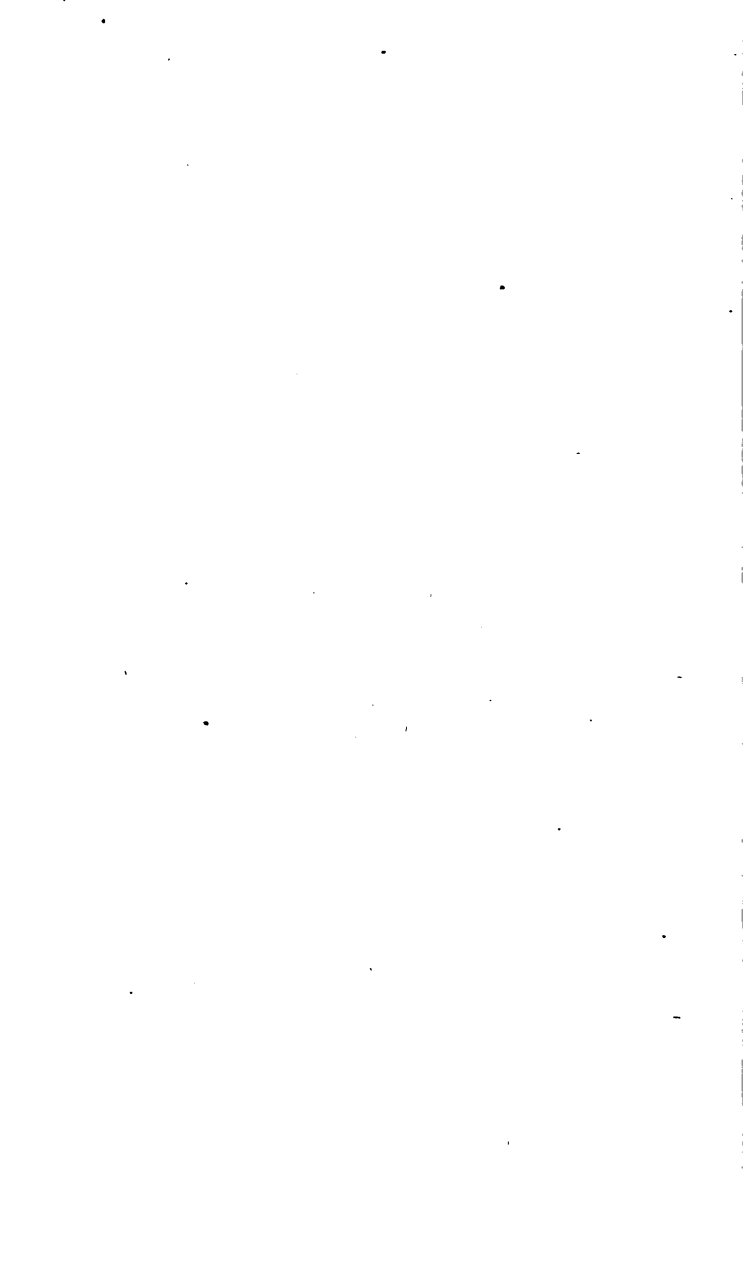
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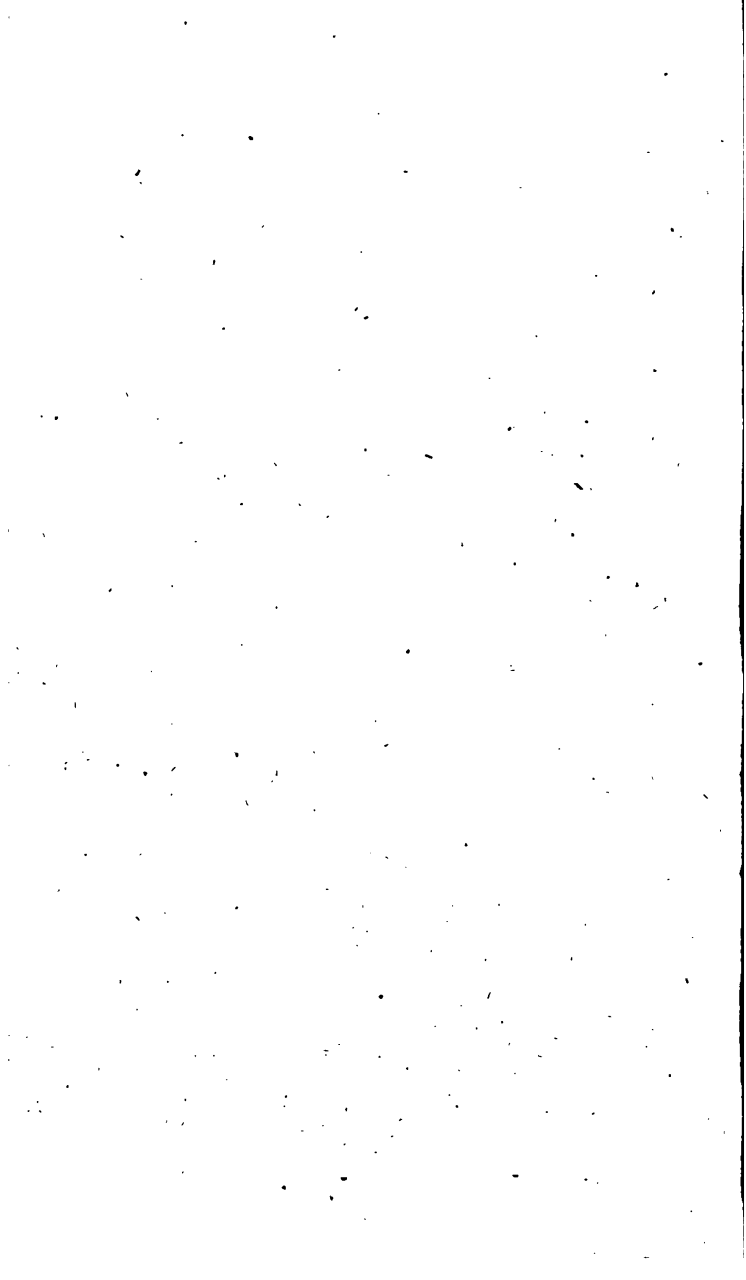
THE INVISIBLE ENEMY.



A ROMANCE.



Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.



THE
INVISIBLE ENEMY;

OR,

THE MINES OF WIELITSKA.

A Polish Legendary Romance.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY T. P. LATHY,

AUTHOR OF

USURPATION, THE PARACLETE, &c. &c.

Nature! great Parent! whose unceasing hand
Rolls round the seasons of the changeful year,
How mighty, how majestic are thy works!
With what a pleasing dread they swell the soul!

THOMSON,

VOL. IV.

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1806.



THE

INVISIBLE ENEMY.

CHAP. I.

I WAS thrust into a hole, about five feet square, and as many high, where, from its being underground, I could not distinguish between day and night. They gave me a little black bread, some half-boiled beans, and stinking water: a little dirty straw was all that kept my body from the damp ground. When they came, as they did once in every twenty-four hours, to bring me my allowance, if I complained of ill

usage, they gave me blows. After some days, as I guess, for, as I have already said, I had no mode of measuring time, a person came with those who brought me my food, and advised me to request an audience of the Reverend Fathers of the Inquisition; I did so that instant, and it was granted me for the ensuing day. I was then brought before those gentlemen, one of whom demanded what it was I wanted with them?— I told them that I requested to be permitted to return to my native country, England: they gave me no reply, but nodded to my guards, who instantly re-conducted me to my dungeon. Several days afterwards, I was again brought before them, and the same question was put to me. I answered that I was a subject of the King of England, and answerable to no other than the laws of my country, nor to those in point of my religious principles. I was again sent back: rage and despair now seized me; I determined to refuse all food, and to hasten my end: I threw myself on the ground,

ground, and received a violent contusion on one side of my head, by somewhat which, on searching, I found to be an iron staple, which I supposed to have been brought in accidentally among the straw. I at first welcomed this instrument, as affording me the means of a speedy dissolution; but, on reflection, I thought I might convert it into the means of my deliverance.

‘I went to work instantly; and in less than two days, as I guess, by the meals which I received, I had extracted a single stone from the wall; a second easily gave way: and in a few hours, the hole was large enough for me to pass through. On the other side was another subterraneous dungeon, prodigiously large, and no less obscure than that which I had just quitted. I had no sooner entered it, than I began to grope about, and I touched nothing but ropes, pullies, levers, wheels, and other apparatus of torture, by which I concluded that I was in what was called the *question-*

room. I came at last to a door, but it was too strong to afford me the least hopes of forcing it. I began to grope afresh, and came to a chimney; my escape now appeared certain, and hope gave me strength and courage to persist. I entered the chimney, and wound about and climbed until I had got about half way up, where I met an iron grating, which stopped my progress.

This unexpected obstacle, however, did not damp my ardour. I held the grating with one hand, and wrought with the staple in the other, until, after a most tedious operation, I pierced the wall beneath the grating. This last hole opened into a granary filled with grain, and when I entered it, I espied a small window, which communicated with the roofs of the adjoining houses. It was at that time broad day, and I dared not hazard to proceed any farther: I resolved, therefore, to return to my dungeon, and wait till night came: I ran the less risk in doing so, as I
had

had received my pittance for the ensuing twenty-four hours, only just before I quit-
ted it, and had ~~not~~ another visit to expect
until that time should be expired. When
I got to the bottom of the chimney, I care-
fully picked up all the stones and rubbish
which I had thrown down into the fire-
place, and hid them behind some planks,
which I found placed against a wall; I
then entered my dungeon, and replaced
the stones in the wall, between that and
the chamber of torture, with the greatest
care. I had not long finished this last task;
before I heard a noise on the other side;
and as the wall, though apparently closed,
was open at the interstices, whence I had
dug out the mortar, there was room enough
to see what passed on the other side. I
heard the door open, and presently be-
held two men enter, hideously appalled,
with wild and haggard looks, holding a
flambeau in one hand, and a dagger in the
other: three Dominican friars, a secretary
who attended them, and another person,

whose office I afterwards found was that of an interpreter, seated themselves round a table, covered with black cloth, on which was placed a holy water vase on one side, a mass-book on the other, and in the middle a crucifix and a sword formed a St. Andrew's cross. At this instant I thought myself inevitably lost; the hole I had made in the wall might be discovered, and I should be known as the workman.

After the Dominicans and secretary had laughed and joked together for about ten minutes, they rose, and recited the hymn "*Exurgat Deus*."—During the recitation, the two men with the flambeaux stood at the bottom of the table, directly opposite to me, and appeared more terrible than before.

The hymn was scarcely finished before I heard some groans, without being able to judge from whence they proceeded.—Immediately the door opened again, and a girl of about seventeen years of age entered, between four hideous spectres of men;

‘ This unfortunate creature having advanced, with tottering steps, near the table, threw herself at the feet of her judges, without being able to utter a single word for the tears and sobs, which choaked her utterance: when she had somewhat recovered herself, she said to them in French (which I understood, and which was repeated to the Inquisitors in Portuguese), and with an accent capable of melting the very rocks—

“ Rise, my pretty child,” said one of the Inquisitors; “ you are now brought
B 4 hither

hither before us, to make an ingenuous confession of all the crimes of which you have been accused, and to merit, by a sincere disclosure, the mildness and clemency of the Holy Office."

"What confession can I make you?" replied the wretched girl: "the first time I appeared before you, I acquainted you with all I had to say; I now repeat it. I do not believe that I have ever committed any enormous offence against God, whom I serve and adore; I do not know that I have ever offended a good father, and a tender and affectionate mother, whom I love, and whose memory I shall ever venerate, whose lessons of wisdom and examples of virtue, will ever be before my eyes. I do not think that I have ever been wanting in my duty towards my fellow-creatures, to whom I have rendered every service in my power, and have wished every happiness I hoped for myself: if you demand the truth, I have told it."

"Leave off those common-place observations,"

vations," cried the head questioner; "our ears are fatigued with similar excuses. It should seem that three-fourths of those who appear before us, have passed the word on to another, to hold a similar language to us. Let us come to the purpose, my child; confess that your father, who has eluded our search, is one of those heretics who, despising the communion, and the mysteries and articles of faith which our mother, the holy church, believes, teaches, and commands us to believe, as well as all the pious and salutary exercises, which she has instituted for the purification of our souls, have reduced themselves to believe almost nothing, and to obey only the notions of heretic innovators; who, by a feigned probity, a toleration of the opinions of others, and, by appearing as peaceable and devout men, the better to ensnare in the nets of Satan the simple and the unwary, have made a very considerable breach in the flock of the faithful. Do not give us room to insist on a confession,

which our duty compels us to demand of you, but prevent it by owning that your father has inculcated into you his abominable practices and principles; that you entertained a contempt of the Apostolic, Catholic, and Roman religion, and a hatred for the Holy Inquisition; that, under covert of this contempt and hatred, the devil had taken possession of you, that he has subjugated you by his craft, and that you have yielded yourself up to him. Confess, I say, these horrible crimes against the church and its ministers; give up your accomplices; tell us where your father is concealed, and all those who resemble him, that we may convince them of their errors, and withdraw them from the high road to perdition, in which they stray.'

"As to my father," cried the girl, "was he a thousand times more guilty than he is, I would only obey the voice of nature, which never tempts us to alleviate our own sufferings at the expence of our blood.—As to those who are of his way of thinking,
I know

I know very few of them, as we are strangers, and lately come from France; but those I have seen are wise, sober, and discreet persons, who only differ from your opinions so far as their reason dictates to them, and an enlightened conscience obliges them to do; who do what good they are able, merely for the sake of doing it; who reckon their days only by the benefits they have conferred, and whom I should not betray if it were in my power. On the contrary, if you recompence virtue, from whence I have never swerved, by such severities as I have suffered at your hands, I pray Heaven to preserve them from such a reward. As for the contempt and hatred with which you accuse me, towards your church and its ministers, I protest to you, in sincerity of heart, that one of the first duties which my parents taught me, was to despise and hate no one, of what religion soever he might be, and I have constantly practised it to this day."

"My child," said the Inquisitor, "you have confessed, without intending it, that you are a heretic; go on—tell us wherein your heresy consists, and what have been its consequences: do not oblige us to have recourse to rigour. Confess, or we shall put you to the torture."

"The torture!" exclaimed the poor girl, "how can I endure it?—Alas! reverend Fathers, who has authorized you to torment your fellow-creatures, who, with all possible moral virtues, have only the misfortune of holding a different opinion from yourselves?"

"Who has authorized us!" cried the Inquisitor, "the honour of our religion—the glory of an avenging and terrible God!"

"That God is not my God," said the girl; "mine approves neither the persecution nor the destruction of the human race; he hates discord, injustice, violence, and cruelty. All nature assures me that my God is beneficent; it does not wear
the

the aspect of a God who scatters fear and dismay ; it does not betoken a cruel and capricious deity, whose incense is blood and tears, or who is so senseless as to be appeased by the unmeaning contortions and grimaces of fanatics;—it announces a God who makes us the objects of his tenderest care, who lavishes his bounties on us, and who has given us reason to enjoy his benefits ; it makes us believe in a God who is pleased with mildness, justness, and beneficence, and who exacts from us the practice of those virtues—in a God who pities our weaknesses; and if he punishes us, punishes as a father who loves us. If he has any dreadful punishment in store, it is only for the perversely wicked, and especially for the vain and cruel, who have made him a God like themselves—a compound of all their passions and vices ; in whose name they arrogate to themselves, for their own ends, a right of tyrannising over the consciences of others—of being the scourges of the human race, and the terror and disgrace of nature.”

“ Just

“ Just Heaven, what impiety ! ” exclaimed the Inquisitor ; “ abominable creature ! — the devil alone can have inspired thee with such blasphemies against the nature of the Divinity, so solidly established in the Holy Scripture, and against his holy worship, prescribed by the church. Executioners, do your office ; torment her, till you force from her a confession of her connection with Satan, a further account of her other crimes, and who and where are her accomplices. ”

‘ The Inquisitor had no sooner pronounced these words, than the four spectres, who had brought in this unfortunate creature, began to strip her, and the other two prepared their infernal apparatus. — Profound silence reigned in the midst of this horrid preparation : the gloomy lights, the fatal instruments, the terror of the hapless victim, the pitiless looks of the Inquisitors, and the furious demeanour of the executioners, almost deprived me of my senses ; and I was scarcely in a better situation

situation than the poor wretch whose anguish they were going to enjoy.

‘ When they had stripped her, so far as decency would allow, the executioners bound her hands behind her back, and passing the end of the cord through a pulley, fastened to the ceiling, they drew her up to it. Having kept her thus suspended some time, they suddenly let go the cord ; she fell to the ground, and dislocated several of her joints : the cords which bound her arms cut her flesh and nerves to the bone, and made her utter the most heart-rending cries. After a few minutes relaxation, the same horrible torture recommenced ; but they could not extort from her, if she knew where her father and those of his persuasion were concealed.

‘ After these diabolical torments had lasted nearly an hour, she swooned, and was, to all appearance, dead. One of the Inquisitors, approaching her, placed his butchering hand on her pale, lifeless cheek, and said, with a fiend-like accent, that
there

there was no occasion for calling in a physician—a few drops put up her nostrils would recover her. The application was made, and the poor wretch regained her senses, but remained on the ground, unable to move a limb. The Inquisitor then reproached her, in the harshest terms, with the unheard-of blasphemies which she had uttered against the Divinity, and his holy worship; he added, that she ought not, however, to despair of the mercy of God. He extolled the zeal and charity of the Holy Office, which desired not the death of sinners, but the safety of their souls, &c. Neither this harangue, nor the promises or threats which followed it, could prevail upon the poor girl to confess what he wanted. She said, with a voice capable of dissolving adamant—

“Alas! reverend Fathers, have you renounced all humanity?—Does not this shocking sight touch you?—Consider these dislocated limbs—this tender frame, torn to pieces, and have pity on a wretch
5 expiring

expiring at your feet!—Have commiseration on my sex—on my hapless fate!—No, barbarians!” exclaimed she, a moment afterwards, “your hearts are not penetrable: I read in your eyes the ferocity of blood-thirsty lions and tygers. Tear my body to pieces!—Glut yourselves with my blood!—Insatiate monsters!”

‘The Inquisitor gave a nod to the executioners, who seized her again, and placing her in a narrow trough, squeezed her with so much violence, that she soon lost her senses once more.

‘Means were again employed to bring her back, and the same questions were put to her as before, but in vain. They then lighted a fire, rubbed her legs with oil, lard, and other penetrating substances, and held them close to the fire till—but I will torture your feelings no more. When she had, a third time, lost all sensation, they carried her away, and in a few minutes, the place where this inhuman scene had been acted, was in total darkness.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

I SHOULD then have thought it a happiness to have reached the granary window, and to have escaped the fangs of these monsters, by precipitating myself into the street; but hope whispered me that I should yet finish my course in a natural way. When I judged the night to be pretty well advanced, I removed the stones from the wall, entered the question-room, found the chimney still warm with the ashes of the fire, which they had employed in their demoniacal purposes, climbed up it, entered the granary, and to my infinite satisfaction, found it very dark, but light enough

enough for my purpose. I got through the window on the roofs of the adjoining houses, and climbed over them, till a cross street prevented my farther progress. I then tried a trap-door in the house where I was, and easily wrenched it open. I descended with as little noise as my hurry and trepidation would permit, till I came to the front room on the first floor, the door of which stood open, and I saw a light. I stood awhile, uncertain whether to proceed or not: at length I approached the door, and saw a girl making a bed. Whether she heard me, or had finished her employment, I know not, but she came out, with the candle in her hand, and seeing me with a long black cloak and hood, a long beard, a lank face, and my eyes inflamed with fear, rage, and despair, she uttered a scream, and fell on the floor. There was no time to be lost, for I had heard that the Inquisition would burn any person who suffered the escape of one of their victims: I rushed into the room, opened the window, then returned, and

and blew out the candle, to prevent my being seen, and jumped out into the street, luckily without breaking any bones.'

'And in ten minutes,' said Father John, seeing he had ended his narrative, 'the officers of the Holy Office will be here in pursuit of you. Run, fly, instantly leave the city.'

'I cannot in this garb, and without money,' replied the Englishman; 'there is no fear of my being discovered till the usual time to-morrow of bringing my pittance to my late dungeon. Assist me, therefore, my friends, with a disguise, and give me my share of our common stock.'

'Psha!' cried Father John; 'your confinement, and the strange things you have seen, have quite deranged you. You should think yourself well off to have escaped the tender mercies of Messieurs the Inquisitors; and, instead of demanding money of us, you should deem it a very great favour that we do not instantly give the alarm, and send you back to your dungeon.'

'Is

‘Is it possible?’ exclaimed the Englishman;—‘do my comrades mean to defraud me of my share of the fruits of our joint industry?—will my late misfortunes only induce them to insult and wrong me?’

‘You may thank your own imprudence for your misfortunes,’ replied Father John; ‘hence, this instant, I say, or I give the alarm.’

“The Englishman sat coolly down, and looked stedfastly in Father John’s face for a few moments. But I should have informed you, that during our tedious travels through the deserts of Tartary, we had proposed, as an amusement, that each of us should recount the history of his life, and the Englishman, of course, was acquainted with that of Father John.

‘Am I then,’ said the Englishman, ‘threatened to be delivered up to the Inquisition, by Father John, the Capuchin, the Lutheran, Arminian, Calvinist, Brownist, Baptist, Anabaptist, Socinian, Arian, Quaker, Jew, Deist, and Atheist?—by Father John,
the

the Mussulman, who bears the indelible marks of circumcision upon him?—Well, be it so ; put your threats into execution. We will both go to the Inquisition together, and see who will be able to bear their helish torments with the better grace, Father John or I.’

“ At these words, pronounced with an astonishing firmness, Father John appeared to be somewhat disconcerted ; and I should not have been sorry to have seen the officers of the Inquisition enter at the moment, and seize them both, as in that case neither of them would have wanted their share of the common stock.

‘ What ! ’ continued the Englishman, ‘ have you no relish for a meeting with the reverend Inquisitors ?—You threatened me this instant ; it is now my turn. Give me my share of the money we have coined in concert, or I will this instant call the guard, and they will find proofs enough to hang all of us.’

“ As he said these words, he went to the window,

window, and I now began to shake for my own safety.

‘Come, come, Father John,’ said I, ‘you have carried the joke far enough; it is no time to trifle with a man who has already lain under, and fears to be again exposed to, the lash of the Inquisition. Let us come to a fair division.’

“Father John was glad of an opportunity of coming about, and embracing the Englishman, he called him his dear friend, and told him that nothing could be farther from his intentions than to wrong him.—The money was produced and divided, deducting ten pistoles from each share for Diego. After having shaved and disguised the Englishman, in the best manner I could, he bade us adieu and left us. We afterwards heard that he went to the English consul, who immediately had him conveyed on board a man of war belonging to that country, which happened to be then in the Tagus. The Inquisition demanded him, and threatened, in case of refusal,

refusal, to cause the ship to be fired upon by the cannon of the castle; but the captain answered, that a British subject was not bound to answer any one in matters of religion, and unless he had infringed the civil laws, he should not deliver him up; he added, that if the castle talked to him with their guns, he should certainly answer in the same kind of language.

“The Englishman was no sooner gone than we began to consider that the officers of the Inquisition would inevitably pay us a visit in the morning; and having packed up all our effects, we opened the street door, and decamped with the boy and baggage, without making the least noise. We then went to the very outskirts of the city, and entered a little mean tavern, as if we had been travellers just come from the country: here we remained several days, during which, Father John, the Jew, and myself, never stirred out of doors; but we dispatched Diego to traverse the city,
under

under pretence of hiring a house for us, but in reality to learn whether the *familiars*, as they call the runners of the Holy Office, had given over all pursuit of us.

“ At the end of that time, as we thought it dangerous to continue any longer in so large a body, we agreed to divide our spoils and separate. The Jew and Diego took the route to Spain, and myself and Gramani got safely on board a vessel bound to Venice.

“ Here we continued our old calling of rendering the precious metals more valuable, by stamping them with the insignia of sovereignty ; but whether the police had any suspicions of our employment, or were only actuated by their jealousy of all strangers, which is no where carried to a greater height, they gave their officers a description of our persons, and orders to apprehend us.

“ We were spending an evening as usual, at a house of public entertainment, when two persons entered the room, and seated

themselves in the same box on the outside of us, so that we could not pass by them without disturbing them. To our very great surprise, we heard them give our own description, and the places to which we most commonly resorted. It was then so dusky that they could not plainly see, or our confusion would have betrayed us: we waited some time, in hopes of their departure, but finding that they called for candles, Father John instantly desired to pass them, in a most civil manner, but they as civilly desired us to make ourselves easy, and take a glass of wine with them.— Father John pretended a prior engagement, but they would not stir, and we gave ourselves up for lost. The candles were at length brought, and we had a full view of each other. Father John then thought that our only resource was to make the officers drink so much that we might easily escape from them; and he himself set them the example, by filling quick, and calling for more wine.

“ The

“The officers appeared to be so taken with Father John’s lively sallies, of which he was very profuse, that one of them, at length, candidly confessed that we were the persons whom they were seeking; but he added, that it would be our own faults if we came to any harm. Father John pretended ignorance of any reason the police could have for interfering with us, and asked the officers if they were informed of it?—They replied, that they were never made acquainted with those matters; their business was only to receive their orders and execute them, which they never performed with rigour, if the suspected persons *behaved properly*. Father John took courage at this assurance, and he immediately addressed them as follows:—

‘Gentlemen, your confidence demands ours, as well as our grateful acknowledgements. I will tell you what I suppose to be the reason why you have received orders to detain us. I am the son of a noble family in Mantua, and have left my home

to avoid being forced into a marriage which was very disagreeable to me, though advantageous to our family. I have no doubt that my father, the Duke of Guastalla, has discovered the place of my concealment, and has procured an order to seize and bring me back. I would rather die than submit to a match which I detest; and if you suffer us to depart from Venice, we have money enough to reward you handsomely.'

'You speak like a nobleman,' replied one of the officers, 'and we shall treat you as such. We shall run some risk in complying with your desires, but we are ready to hear what you have to propose.'

"We instantly emptied our pockets, which contained about one hundred pistoles, and promised them as many more if they would accompany us home. The officers pocketed the money, and one of them went out to hire a gondola, that we might pass unobserved. When he came back,

back, we went with him to the place where the boat was waiting, and soon reached our lodging. We packed up all our cash, except another hundred pistoles, which we gave to the officers, who told us we must be contented to go home with them till all the city should be in profound repose, when we might escape with safety.

“On our arrival at the officer's house, we found the family busily engaged in making preparations for the christening of a newborn heir of this *respectable* family. The officer requested Monsignor, the son of the Duke of Guastalla, to do him the honour to stand sponsor for his son, which was condescendingly complied with: the officer, enraptured at this noble compliment to his first-begotten, introduced us to his wife, the nurse, and all the other good women who attended on this important occasion. They beheld our noble persons with astonishment, and were delighted at our descending from our dignity to salute them. The ceremony was per-

c 3

formed,

formed, and the usual libations succeeded with so much conviviality, that in a short time the whole of this notable assemblage were pretty well deranged in their intellects. Father John—I beg his pardon, Monsignor, the son of the Duke, pushed about the bowl merrily; but he had not forgotten business in the midst of this scene of revelry. He had observed, as we passed through an outer room, to enter the sick room, that the officer had unlocked a writing-desk, and deposited our two hundred pistoles in one of the drawers; and after having secured them, he had placed the key in a table drawer, which was unlocked. When Gramani saw that not one of the company was able to leave their chairs, he pretended an occasion to leave the room, found the key, seized our own pistoles, and a tolerable booty besides; he then re-locked the writing-desk; and threw the key down the vault. This matter of business being settled, he rejoined the company, and soon after proposed departing.

ing. At taking our leave, Monsignor, the son of the Duke, surprised the whole company by his liberality, in presenting a ring of no great value, as he termed it, since it cost only one thousand pistoles, (in which he had exaggerated at least nine hundred and ninety) to his godson, and throwing down twenty pistoles for the nurse and attendants. This act of generosity made them all stare, and drew forth the most lavish acknowledgments and praises, as their tongues could utter them. Having once more endured the embraces of these sons and daughters of the jolly god, we were permitted to retire.

“ You may readily suppose that we did not rest during the remainder of that night nor the next day. On the night ensuing, we agreed to remain in the fields, as we did not think it prudent to appear in any town, lest we might be pursued. Fatigue and want of rest soon drove us, for myself at least, into a sound repose, from which I did not arouse till some hours after

sunrise, and even then I could scarcely believe that I was really awake, as I could see nothing of Father John. After I had sufficiently convinced myself that my eyes were open, I walked to some distance round the spot where I had lain down, and hallooed several times, until I had no doubt left that my companion had designedly decamped. I instantly searched my pockets, and was happy to find that I had my share of the money which I had received at the division of our spoils at Lisbon; but Father John had forgotten to account to me for the half of what he had taken from the writing-desk of the police officer at Venice.

“After some consideration, I determined to pursue my course to Genoa, which route we had taken, and where I thought I might probably light on Father John; but as I came to these mountains, I was seized by this troop, and finding myself left once more without a single coin, I accepted their proposal of joining them.

“It

"It was not long before I signalized myself on several occasions, and was looked upon as a staunch brother; and my fame was established on an occasion which happened about three years after my becoming one of the fraternity. One of our comrades, who had ventured too near the walls of Genoa, was seized and carried to the prison of that city in triumph. The whole troop were determined not to abandon him to his fate, without making a desperate attempt to release him. At a council, held to deliberate on the means of executing our design, it was concluded that some one of the most daring of us should venture into Genoa, to reconnoitre the prison, and to hire some place where a large party of the troop might be concealed, till some opportunity offered of forcing the prison. The enterprize was regarded as so desperate that no one offered himself, although the whole of these brave men declared that they would abide the chance of drawing lots, or would leave it to their captain to

pick out any one of them. I did not hesitate to volunteer my services, and the most general applause followed my offer, which was instantly accepted.

“Having loaded a mule with baskets of figs, eggs, poultry, and game, and disguised myself in the garb of a peasant, I set off at break of day, and entered the city. I had scarcely entered the walls, before I observed a great bustle before the gate of a large edifice, and soon learned that one of the daring banditti, who infested the mountains, was going thither to undergo an examination before Signor Gramani, one of the most intelligent and acute magistrates of the city. I loitered about the place, as if impelled by the same curiosity as so many hundreds of other persons, to behold one of these dreaded desperadoes, until I saw our comrade brought through the streets, heavily ironed, and guarded by a large party of soldiers. I abandoned my mule, and rushed into the hall with the rest, where I
forced

forced a passage for myself, until I had gained a situation where I could see and be seen by our comrade.

“Even I myself, who had been equally inured to the dangers of our life, could not refrain from admiring the undaunted air of the prisoner, who, instead of betraying the least symptoms of apprehension for his own fate, looked round on the spectators, with a scowling and menacing eye. He appeared to scrutinize every face, as he himself has since told us, with an intent to see if he could recognize the face of any of his comrades, who, he had no doubt, would not fail to make some attempt to liberate him: at length his eye fixed upon me. He gave me a look, which I instantly interpreted into that of satisfaction; and then continuing to look round as before, he never directed his eye towards me again.

“In a little time we heard silence commanded, as the magistrate was about to enter the hall. A little private door, near

the justice-seat, opened ; and to my utter surprise and joy, I beheld, in the *intelligent and acute* magistrate who entered, my old associate, Father John, of Domfront !— When all those who had any thing to allege against the prisoner had been heard, the magistrate demanded if he would confess his crimes, or what he had to urge in his defence ?

‘ I have no crimes to confess,’ replied he ; ‘ mankind rob one another, and I rob them. My whole defence consists in a troop of brave comrades, who, if they cannot save me, will never fail to revenge my death upon your citizens.’

“ This speech, uttered with a most undaunted air, and menacing look, struck all the spectators with surprise and terror.— Most of them, I am convinced, would have wished rather to have seen him set at liberty, than to have braved the revenge of his comrades, with which he threatened them. He was, however, remanded back to the prison for a final trial. I left the
hall

hall with the rest of the spectators, from one of whom I learned where the *intelligent and acute* magistrate lived, and began to look for my mule, which had strayed to some distance, and had been nearly pillaged of all my marketing. This disaster provoked the laughter of all the by-standers, at the expence of the curious peasant. I withdrew from them with all possible speed, to prevent their having any suspicion of my person, and repaired to the street in which Signor Gramani resided. I knocked at the door of his superb house, and desired admittance to him, but the servant who opened it only sneered at me, and replied, that his master never troubled his head with such people as me, and that if I had any articles to dispose of at a reasonable price, he would settle that business. I did not hesitate to tell him that I called by Signor Gramani's own orders, and that he had business with me: the servant then left me, and soon returned with directions to admit me.

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“When I entered the room in which Gramani was sitting, he did not, at first, recognise me, as I wore a slouched hat, which half covered my face, in order to conceal it the better. He instantly demanded who I was?

‘Signor Gramani,’ replied I, ‘may have forgotten his old friend, Boccanegra; but he remembers Father John, of Domfront.’

“As I spoke these words, I lifted up my hat, and presented my well-known visage to the astonished Gramani. He, however, soon recovered from his surprize, and taking me by the hand, called me his *dear friend*. He then desired to know the reason of the dress in which he saw me, and how I came to find him out, which I soon gave him an account of.

‘You will not lose your labour,’ said he; ‘your comrade shall be released this very night, and shall be with you to-morrow morning: I am happy to have it in my power to render you any service, and
if

if any future occasion should present itself, you may rely on me.'

"He then assured me, that he had not left me designedly, and that he could account for it no otherwise than by his having been accustomed to walk in his sleep, which, he supposed, must have been the case on the night when we separated. He stated his surprise to have been equal to mine, when he awoke and could see nothing of me; that he had taken similar pains to find me, and after a fruitless search, had wandered about to different places, till chance had thrown him upon Genoa, where, by a little management, he had obtained the office of magistrate.

"I appeared to be perfectly convinced with his excuse for leaving me, as also with his apology for not keeping me to dinner with himself, for fear of exciting some suspicion, which might prove dangerous to himself, as well as to me. He then rang his bell, and having ordered his servant to purchase all the articles which I had

to

to sell, and to take me into the hall, and give me whatever refreshment there was in the house, we parted.

“ I soon concluded my business with the servant, and having discharged my mule, I followed him into the hall, where I ate and drank so heartily of the cold viands and wine which they placed before me, that he and his comrades were no less pleased at my mode of feasting at free cost, than the honest citizens had been before diverted at my having lost the greater part of my marketing, through my curiosity to behold one of the banditti.

“ When I had finished my repast, and received my money, I mounted my mule, and returned to my companions, very well satisfied with the success of my expedition. They instantly flocked round me, to know what I had done.

‘ You will see that to-morrow morning,’ was all the reply I would give to numerous and earnest enquiries. To their infinite surprise, their comrade returned
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the next morning, and flew into my arms before he uttered a single syllable.

‘My dear Boccanegra!’ exclaimed he, after a while, ‘I was full of hopes when I beheld you in the hall of examination, and I was not deceived, for I am assured that I owe my release to you.’

“His comrades enquired in what manner he had got out of prison?”

‘All that I know of the matter,’ replied he, ‘is, that I was fast asleep, when one of the gaolers aroused me, knocked off my fetters, bade me follow him, and when we were outside the prison gate, he bade me be off, and never be seen there again. I told him it should not be my own fault if I was. I was obliged to parade the streets till the gates were opened, and I then flew off like a bird, which by chance finds its cage door open.’

“My comrades then desired me to acquaint them in what manner I had been the means of this strange deliverance. I told them that I would not make that discovery, lest
it

it should prevent me from rendering any of them a similar favour, if it should fall to their lot.

"This adventure, added to my former reputation, caused me to be chosen to succeed their captain when he died, and I have now filled that office nearly three-years, more to the satisfaction of those who have invested me with it; during which time I have had several occasions to make use of my interest with Signor Gramani, which he has never denied me; but he has never spoken a word about restoring to me the half of the booty which we made in conjunction on the police officer of Venice.

"Well," added Boccánegra, after he had finished his story, "what think you now, Signor, of your friend Gramani, alias Father John, Monsignor, the son of the Duke of Guastalla?"

"I am both surprised and shocked," replied Giovanni, "at the idea of having admitted such a man to my intimacy; but may I not be permitted to see Guarco, and
hear

hear what more he knows of this conspiracy?"

"Certainly," said Boccanegra: "he will give you every information in his power, as he is no longer afraid of Gramani, having agreed to abandon his service, and join our troop."

Guarco was then brought before Giovanno, and informed him that Gramani had set him to work, and had told him that he need not be afraid of the danger, since he would be privately supported by the Count del Piombino, although he did not chuse to countenance the attempt openly.—

"After you had set out from Genoa to Paris," continued Guarco, "Gramani recommended Sardine, his domestic, who possessed the first place in his confidence, to your friend Rosomaski, in order to be a spy on all his actions. If you arrest Sardine before he can have any intimation of the discovery which you have made, you will, perhaps, discover about him some proofs of what Gramani is plotting against yourself

yourself and your friends. When Sardine was gone, Gramani did me the honour to pitch upon me to succeed him, and I was entrusted with the direction of the affair of seizing and carrying you to Montobio. How they were to have proceeded, after having got you in security, I do not know. I was the person who watched you in the mountains, and to whom one of your party gave chase, but I easily escaped, and you arrived within two hundred yards of our party, which lay in ambush, when you halted, and suddenly galloped back the way you came. Instead, however, of overtaking you, as we hoped to have done, we fell in with a party belonging to this troop, who stretched out three of us before the rest would think of surrendering."

From Sardine's having gained a footing in the service of Rosomaski, Giovanni concluded that some schemes were framing against the happiness of his friends, and he was impatient to return to Genoa. He
desired.

desired Boccanegra to fix the price of his ransom.

"We will not be hard with you," said Boccanegra; "you are immensely rich, and we earn our livelihood with great toil and risk. We will not take advantage of the necessity which we know there is of your speedy appearance in Genoa, but will escort you safe to the walls for five hundred ducats."

"I am indebted to your moderation," replied Giovanni, "and will readily pay you the money, on my arrival at Genoa; but my companion here (meaning Dolgorucki) must be included in our capitulation, as I cannot think of leaving him behind; and you know he is only an unfortunate fugitive from his own country, and will want what little money he has, to carry him to another."

"He shall accompany you," said Boccanegra; "but you cannot have your liberty till to-morrow. You know that I have a little account to settle with Gramani, for my

my half of the booty which he took from the writing-desk of the police officer at Venice, and I must make some money out of him by this business. Guarco is about to return to him presently, to acquaint him that you are in the custody of his comrades, but that they refuse to deliver you up till they have received a considerable sum of money; he will not dare to refuse it: and after having thus retaliated upon him the trick which he formerly played me, you shall set off immediately."

"I fear," said Giovanni, "that he may contrive some mischief against my friends in the interval."

"You can easily prevent that, by sending a note to them by Guarco, to put them on their guard," said Boccanegra; "I will answer that it shall be delivered."

This permission somewhat eased the mind of Giovanni, and having been furnished with materials for writing, he acquainted Rosomaski that he had met with
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an unexpected delay on the road, but that he expected to be with them on the next day. He cautioned him to beware of Gramani, who, he was well informed, was contriving some plot against him and his family, before his own return; but desired that not the least notice should be taken to Gramani of what he had written, nor any change of behaviour take place towards him.

Giovanno gave this note to Boccanegra to peruse, that he might see he had not given the least hint of the place of his captivity, and he was well satisfied with it.—Guarco was then ordered to deliver it into the hands of Rosomaski, before he even went to Gramani.

CHAP. III.

GRAMANI was waiting impatiently for the return of Guarco, when he appeared before him. Guarco gave him a long story of their having seized Giovanni, who had made his hirelings such liberal offers to obtain his liberty, that he had, with the greatest difficulty, extracted from them a promise that they would give him into his hands, upon the payment of one thousand pistoles.

“One thousand pistoles!” exclaimed Gramani, with a long whistle at the end of his exclamation, “the unconscionable rascals! I would rather give Giovanni his
5 liberty,

liberty, and let them have their labour for their pains."

"As you please," said Guarco; "but from their prisoner's anxiety to procure his release, there is little doubt but much more may be made of him. The fellows, however, will not hear of one pistole less, and there is no time to be lost."

Gramani left Guarco to acquaint the Piombinos with this untoward circumstance. The Countess was not at all disconcerted at the intelligence; she directly answered, that if Giovanni was so very solicitous for his release, they might make good interest of the thousand pistoles, and yet detain him till Gramani should have carried off Paulina, if he were industrious. Gramani acquiesced, but wanted to know whence the money was to come; he was quite drained.

"That's well thought of," said the Count, who had not hitherto uttered a syllable; "I was just about to send for my dear Gramani, to acquaint you, that I myself

was under an indispensable necessity of raising one thousand pistoles this very day; and we may as well raise the two thousand at once, to answer both our purposes."

Gramani expected some such answer, and he had brought with him a written security ready for signing. The indolent Count put his name to it, without troubling himself to read what were the contents; and Gramani, with much difficulty, found a Jew, who agreed to advance the two thousand pistoles for six months, on having the blank left in the security filled up with the sum of three thousand, and interest. When this conscientious bargain was settled, Gramani dispatched Guarco, and then went to the Count with five hundred pistoles, which he declared was all he could raise above the thousand which he had given to Guarco.

When Gramani returned to his own house, he was surprised at beholding Guarco, who informed him, that when he arrived at the city gates they were shut, as it was after the usual hour of keeping them open,

open, and that strict orders had been given not to open them, for fear some of the banditti should get in, and commit some depredations during the night. The affair could not be remedied, and Guarco was obliged to remain till the next morning.

It was noon when Guarco appeared before Boccanegra, who was in ecstasy at his success. It was necessary to stay dinner, to refresh Guarco, who was to return again to Genoa with Giovanni, to fetch his ransom. After dinner, Giovanni, Dolgorucki, and Gramani, had their horses restored to them, and took their leave of Boccanegra. When they arrived within the walls of Genoa, Giovanni pressed Dolgorucki to accompany him home, but he excused himself, alledging that he had some letters which he had promised to deliver immediately on his arrival ; but he assured him that he would wait on him, the instant he should have executed his commission.

The Rosomaskis, to whom Guarco had punctually delivered Giovanni's note, had

been in the most eager expectation of his arrival during the greater part of the day, and their joy at hearing that he was in the house, could not be exceeded. They were standing to receive him, but, to their surprise, they were informed that he was gone to his cabinet. The Rosomaskis wondered that he should feel so little impatience to embrace them, after so long an absence: they were silent, and dreaded some diminution of his friendship: the tear quivered in the eye of the tender Paulina. Giovanni, however, was no less ardent for the happy interview than themselves; but as it was a maxim with him, that faith was to be observed with the worst of men, his first care was to dispatch Guarco with his ransom, and a present for himself. He then ordered Tomaso, whom he had instructed for the purpose, to cause Sardine and all his trunks to be seized and taken care of. These urgent concerns being finished, he flew to the Rosomaskis, and by the eagerness of his embraces, instantly dispelled all
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the little anxieties which had before obtruded themselves into their delicate minds: a delicious interval of silence succeeded, during several minutes, which was interrupted only by the sobs of the females, whose hearts seemed unable to contain their pleasurable sensations.

At length Rosomaski broke silence, and requested Giovanni to give them some explanation of the note which they had received from him the day before, the allusions in which to some plots of Gramani had given them great uneasiness. Giovanni gratified their curiosity, by giving them an account of his detention among the banditti, and of Gramani's baseness. Rhodiska was all over in a tremble, to think what a man she had made the confident of her most intimate concerns. Giovanni was going to give them a sketch of Gramani's history, when Tomaso entered the room, to acquaint him that they had secured Sardine and his baggage. Giovanni told Rosomaski, that they had best examine him
D 3 immediately,

immediately, to get what further proof they could against Gramani, whom he intended to denounce to the Senate on the next morning, for his insult to one who was their representative. Rosomaski acquiesced, and Sardine was brought in by two of the other domestics. Giovanni acquainted him with what had been alledged by his comrade, Guarco, against himself and Gramani, and advised him to conceal nothing from them of his guilt, which would be the only means of saving him from death, or, at least, a confinement for life in the slave galleys. Sardine, with the most unexampled effrontery, denied every part of the accusation, and insisted upon his innocence, till Giovanni nodded to the domestics, who understood his meaning, and one of them instantly left the room, and returned soon after with Sardine's trunk. His easy impudence then began to vanish; his cheeks lost their colour, and his knees trembled. Giovanni demanded the key; but after pretending to search for it, he declared

declared he knew not where it was; he believed he had left it in the trunk. The domestics denied the latter part of his excuse, and Giovanni ordered the trunk to be broken open. Sardine did not tremble without reason; for in his trunk were found all the letters which he had received from Gramani, and which he had kept, notwithstanding Gramani's desire that they should be burnt so soon as he had perused them, in order to keep Gramani in his power. Amongst the rest were the two forged letters, which had nearly proved fatal to Rhodiska. She no sooner beheld them than she fell back into her chair, and exclaimed—"Oh, those two letters!—make Sardine confess how he came by them."—The company were astonished at this exclamation, and Giovanni instantly put the question to Sardine, who, finding that the truth must come to light, fell on his knees before Rhodiska, and intreated her forgiveness and interference with Rosomaski and Giovanni, to prevent their delivering him into the hands of justice.

"What have you been guilty of?" said Rhodiska.

"Of many crimes, but particularly against yourself," replied Sardine; "only promise me that you will save me from the just anger of your husband and Signor Giovanni, and I will confess every thing."

"My husband and Signor Giovanni are merciful," said Rhodiska, "and you will find them so, if you endeavour to repair your offences."

"Let him begin by a sincere confession," said Giovanni.

Sardine then went through Gramani's attempts to destroy the happiness of the Rosomaskis, and particularly that relating to the two forged letters, which had nearly put an end to the sufferings and life of Rhodiska. He concluded by producing the false key to Rosomaski's writing-desk, by means of which he had introduced and withdrawn the letters. The company were shocked at the disclosure of so horrid a conspiracy; and Rhodiska blushed at her weakness,

weakness, in having fallen into the snare. Her eyes no longer dared to move from the ground, lest they should encounter those of Rosomaski, who, observing her pains, proposed to Giovanni to suffer Sardine to retire, and to renew his interrogation the next morning, when he should have fully recollected what further information he might have to give them. Giovanni instantly ordered the domestics to guard Sardine, and to take care that no person whatever had any communication with him, either by writing or in person.

When the domestics were withdrawn, Giovanni desired Rhodiska to inform him of the use to which those two letters had been applied, to create her so extreme an uneasiness; and she gave him the whole account, from her first finding them in Rosomaski's writing-desk, to the end of the farce which had been played between Gramani, Signora Trompettina, and her daughter.

In spite of their indignation at so horrible

a stratagem, Giovanni and Rosomaski could with difficulty refrain from smiling at so ludicrous a scene.

"How ingenious is vice," said Giovanni, "and how easily does it for a while triumph over unsuspecting innocence!—but it is, luckily, too crafty for itself; and the very means which it employs to ensure success, generally bring about its defeat."

"My dear Rosomaski!" said Rhodiska, "I see my folly in falling into so detestable a snare; but be assured, for the future, that I will make you acquainted with even my thoughts. I have been to blame, but I have suffered severely for it; let that plead for me."

"It is almost impossible," replied Rosomaski, "but that you should have fallen into it; nothing could be more artfully contrived and executed. I see what has occasioned your unhappiness; you were afraid of wounding me with any suspicions of my fidelity; but your delicacy has nearly cost you your life, and me my happiness. Let us
hence

hence learn, that in the marriage state there should be no reserve. But what fault can I find?—Was I not equally credulous and equally hasty in the affair of Mr. Vendost?—Have I not myself set the example of reserve?—You must remember, Signor,” added he, addressing himself to Giovanni, “that, previously to your departure for Paris, you commissioned me to visit two ladies, and to supply their wants; it is from that source that the subtle Gramani has drawn all this mischief.”

“Just Heaven!” replied Giovanni, “there cannot be two persons in the world whose characters are farther distant than those of the ladies whom I recommended to your care, and Signora Trompettina and her daughter. The former are persons of a noble family, strict virtue, and polished manners; they have suffered almost incredible misfortunes, which are much worse than those which your invisible enemy has heaped upon your heads, because they were occasioned by the hand of one who ought

to have protected them, and are irremediable. But I forget that, without knowing their persons, you have been already made acquainted with their unfortunate history. The elder of these ladies is no other than the Marchioness of Pallavicini, whose husband founded the monastery at which you were refused admittance on the night previous to your first entrance into Genoa.—The sequel of their melancholy tale is briefly this:—

“After being surprised by the Marquis, Don Louis had fled in such a fright, that it was some time before he began to reflect on his having abandoned the Marchioness to all the fury of a justly-enraged, but deluded husband, who might mistake the proper object of his vengeance. He resolved to return, and to brave every danger, to be assured of her safety: he was surprised when the servants informed him that the Marchioness still reposed in her apartment, and that the Marquis had gone out on horseback. A secret presage made him
dread

dread the worst, and, despising all caution, he hurried to the apartment, where he fell over the wretched object of his unlawful passion, who was stretched out on the floor. He instantly gave the alarm to her women; who came to his assistance, and were shocked at beholding their mistress, to all appearance, lifeless. The grief, rage, and despair of Don Louis, burst out with so much violence, that he would never have survived the person whose destruction he had occasioned, if he had not been agitated by the desire of avenging her.

“He hastened off like a madman, in pursuit of the Marquis, and sought him during three whole years, through Italy, Germany, France, and Spain; when his grief and vexation at the disappointment of his revenge put an end to his sufferings.

“The Marchioness, however, was not mortally wounded, although great danger was apprehended from the effusion of blood, which had been considerable before her attendants came to give her any assistance.

ance. She was, at the fatal period, far advanced in pregnancy ; yet, with the great skill and care of the medical persons who were called on, she was soon out of danger, and in due time gave birth to the daughter who is at present with her. This event, which proved some little consolation to her, was immediately followed by the persecution of the Marquis's relatives, who saw their hopes of inheriting his possessions in danger of being defeated by this new comer ; they, therefore, combined all their efforts to get the infant declared illegitimate, and found means to bring about their wishes. Thus, by one unlucky accident, was the Marchioness deprived of her husband, her reputation, and affluence.— Unable to bear a place which daily reminded her of her misfortunes, she quitted the island, and crossed over to the Continent, in hopes, one day or other, of falling in with her husband, and undeceiving him on the mistake which had occasioned his blind rage. All her researches, however, were

were fruitless, until she arrived in this city, where she discovered that the Marquis had quitted the world, and had founded a convent at no great distance from Genoa, in which he died about a year before her arrival. The Marchioness and her daughter have resided here ever since, and I have been happy enough to alleviate some of those oppressions, which had nearly overwhelmed them. As they visited me frequently, my brother, Justiniano, no sooner beheld the Marchioness's daughter, than he persecuted her so incessantly with his licentious addresses, that they were obliged to refrain from coming to my house, and even from walking publicly in the streets. They have changed lodgings repeatedly, to avoid him; and at length finding all his labours fruitless, he has given them a respite, and they hope that he has entirely forgotten them. You now know my reason for keeping their residence a secret; but I had no idea of excluding those of whose prudence I have the most unequivocal proofs.

proofs. If I had not been sent away so suddenly, I should, in all probability, have requested the favour of your Rhodiska and Paulina, to have accompanied you, and have enlivened, by their conversation and tender sympathy, some of those melancholy hours which they must pass when abandoned to themselves, and reflection upon their cruel destiny!"

Giovanno had no sooner ended the narrative, than Rhodiska remarked, that their own misfortunes had appeared almost too severe to be borne, but that the Marchioness had suffered considerably more, in the loss of her husband, her character, and her reputation, which were irretrievable. She expressed the most earnest desire to be introduced to her, and to contribute every thing in her power towards restoring her to her lost peace. Giovanno promised her that satisfaction in a day or two, when their more urgent affairs should have been placed in a train of settlement.

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At an early hour of the night, they all rose up to retire, that Giovanni might recruit himself from the fatigues of his journey ; but he desired Rosomaski to favour him with his company for a short time in his chamber. When they were alone, Giovanni entreated his friend to put an end to the hopes of the Piombinos and Gramani of disturbing his happiness, by sealing it without any further delay. Rosomaski replied, that it was the wish of his Rhodiska, as well as himself, that his union with their daughter should complete their mutual felicity, and that he should propose it to be brought to a conclusion on the very next day, if it were the wish of his friend. Giovanni embraced Rosomaski in raptures, and desired that he would endeavour to bring the matter about with his wife and daughter, which Rosomaski promised to do : they then separated for the night, to reflect on the joys which they flattered themselves the succeeding day would bring forth.

Gramani

Gramani had remained, during the whole of that day, in the most anxious expectation of the return of Guarco. It was nearly midnight, but he had retained one of his domestics with him, in case of his arrival; he was ruminating on the probable cause of his detention, dreading the recoil of all his stratagems on his own guilty head, and planning schemes as desperate as his fortune, when he was roused by a thundering knock at the street door.

Gramani was wondering what could be the cause of this alarm, at so unusual an hour, when the servant returned, to inform him that a gentleman, a stranger, and apparently, from his dress, a foreigner, wanted to speak with him, on the most urgent business. Gramani ordered him to be introduced: as he entered the room, Gramani earnestly regarded his person, and recognised the well-known features of his old friend and acquaintance, Dolgorucki. Gramani instantly dismissed the servant, and hastily enquired the reason of Dolgorucki's unexpected appearance in Genoa.

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"My business here," replied Dolgorucki, "was principally to interrupt the approaching happiness of the detested Rosomaski, of which you have apprized me; and my journey has been equally fortunate for both of us. Giovanni has been some hours in Genoa, and he has been informed not only of your attempt upon his person, but is also acquainted with the whole history of *Father John, of Domfront*."

The most violent earthquake that ever rent the bowels of the globe, could not have struck more terror into the heart of Gramani, than the concluding four words of this speech; he started up suddenly, and exclaimed—"Then the devil himself must have been his informer, and my enemy!"

"Not so," replied Dolgorucki; "but your old comrade, Boccanegra, and your servant, Guarco, have betrayed all your secrets: however, I am your friend, you know, and that is enough for you. You have lost
deal

deal in Genoa, but return with me to Poland, and you shall play a surer game."

"Before I give you any answer to your proposal," said Gramani, "tell me how you have gained the intelligence which you have just given me."

Dolgorucki then informed him of his meeting with Giovanni, and of all their adventures till their arrival within the walls of Genoa: he then added—"You must contrive to put me in possession of the Rosomaskis, and never trouble your head how affairs go in Genoa. Accompany me to Poland, where you know that I have immense possessions, and I will enable you to live in splendor, and to avenge yourself upon the authors of all your ill success in Italy."

"I am afraid," replied Gramani, "that my power to serve you is at an end, since I dare not go to Giovanni's house, nor even to appear publicly in Genoa again. Giovanni will not lose a moment to impeach me for an attempt to detain the
person

person of an envoy of the state; and if he should refrain from doing so, yet I shall soon, perhaps to-morrow, have all my creditors upon me. I am grateful, however, for the timely information which you have given me of my danger, and am ready to lend you all the assistance in my power towards furthering your designs, trusting to your generosity to fulfil your promises in my favour."

"That is enough," said Dolgorucki; "you know that you may safely rely on my word."

"At present," said Gramani, "I must secure what property I have, and leave the city at break of day. I will conduct you to a place of safety, which is about a league's distance from the city, and there we may contrive, and execute what we contrive, at our ease."

Gramani, aided by his associate Dolgorucki, began to pack up all the cash, jewels, and such other property as might be easily carried away; and so soon as the
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hour arrived at which the city gates were opened in the morning, they went without the walls to a little obscure tavern, which was kept by a man who had formerly rendered some service to Gramani, and had been recompensed by him with setting him up in business. Whilst breakfast was getting ready for them, they were inventing schemes to get the Rosomaskis into their power. Gramani rightly observed, that as Giovanni returned only the evening before from a public mission, he would be obliged to wait upon the Senate that morning; and that if any blow was struck, it should be done in the interval of his absence from home, as he was of opinion the marriage between Giovanni and Paulina would be carried into effect on that day. After some consideration, Dolgorucki asked Gramani if he was acquainted with Giovanni's handwriting, and was answered in the affirmative.

"Then we shall have no very difficult task to perform," said Dolgorucki: "write a letter, as from him, to Rosomaski, pressing
5 ing

ing him and his wife and daughter to meet him without the city walls. This note can be dispatched by a messenger, who may watch the going out of Giovanni, and then take the opportunity of delivering it. They will readily fall into the snare, and a hackney-coach must be in waiting to receive and bring them to us, where we can be ready to seize and carry them off again."

"Your plot appears very feasible," replied Gramani, whose gloomy face brightened with a malignant pleasure: "the landlord of this house is under obligations to me, and I can trust to him to deliver the letter which I shall write; but we shall want assistance to carry off our prisoners."

"Perhaps," said Dolgorucki, "the landlord can recommend a couple of fellows to us, who will be glad to earn twenty or thirty crowns."

"We will know that in a moment," replied Gramani, ringing the bell.

When the landlord appeared, and the question had been put to him, he answered,
that

that there were three persons such as they wanted, at that moment drinking in the kitchen, and asked whether they would wish to see them ?

“ Not just yet,” replied Gramani; “ but give them this crown to drink, and so soon as we have finished our breakfast, we will speak with them.”

“ Very well,” said the landlord; “ you know I can depend on them, or I would not recommend them to you.”

“ But how,” said Gramani to Dolgorucki, after the landlord was gone out, “ are we to carry the Rosomaski so long a journey as that into Poland ?”

“ I have managed every thing of that kind,” replied Dolgorucki; “ my berlin and people are waiting on the other side of the mountains, and relays of horses are already provided on the road. The only difficulty will be to get the Rosomaskis into our power.”



CHAP. IV.

THE sun had scarcely peeped above the horizon to irradiate our hemisphere, before the Rosomaskis and Giovanni, who had scarcely closed their eyes during his absence, rose, as they imagined, to happiness. Fatal delusion!—Paulina was first stirring, and had passed a whole hour at the toilette, before Agatha, whose breast had long been a stranger to those violent emotions which disturb repose, and who was enjoying a sound sleep, had opened her eyes. Paulina no sooner heard her stir, than she cried out—“Oh come hither, Agatha, and tell me if I don’t look frightful.”

"No wonder if you should," replied Agatha, "for I am sure that my eyes would have sunk into my head, if I slept no more at nights than you do."

"It is no time," said Paulina, pettishly, "to talk about the cause; I want to have your opinion on the effect."

"What signifies my opinion?" replied Agatha, "since I do not see with my master's eyes. If you are altered, as they say that love is blind, he will not perceive it; and if he should, he will not be displeased to see that you have fretted for his long absence."

"Nay, but, my good Agatha, do tell me what you think?"

"Why, I think," replied Agatha, "that you look handsome enough for a maid now, and will appear more so when you are a bride at night, which I suppose will be the case."

"Psha!" cried Paulina, with a smile and a blush, "how came such an idea into your head?"

After

After about another hour, passed in a similar kind of conversation, and the duties of the toilette, Paulina was persuaded by Agatha that she was fit to make her appearance, as indeed she was, even on a throne.

She went to the apartment which her parents occupied, where she found her mother dressing; but her father had been summoned an hour before to meet Giovanni, and hear the conclusion of Sardine's confession. This matter was settled just as the ladies entered the room, and the breakfast was immediately brought in, because Giovanni wanted to wait upon the Senate. When Giovanni was departed, Rosomaski, after some preliminary observations on the late intrigues of the Piombinos and Gramani, and the danger of a continuance of them, addressed his wife and daughter as follows:—"It is now time that we defeat the malice of our enemies, and render all their future attempts to destroy our peace abortive. Giovanni's generosity

and benevolence demand all the return which we can make him, and the only one in our power is not to delay that union from which he promises himself all his future felicity. I know that my Rhodiska wishes for its completion, as anxiously as I, or even he himself, can long for it. What says my Paulina?—Can she wish to protract the payment of an immense debt of gratitude, so long due?”

“I hope,” replied Paulina, “that my heart is no less sensible of gratitude than that of my father and mother, or I should be unworthy of them.”

“Then this evening,” said Rosomaski, rising and embracing her, “will fix the happiness of all of us. Every thing is prepared.”

A servant at that moment entered with a letter, which he delivered to Rosomaski, the contents of which were as follow:—

“My

" MY DEAR ROSOMASKI,

" I had not left you ten minutes, before I was apprized that another detestable plot was laid to separate us for ever: to prevent its succeeding, let me intreat you to prevail on your daughter to consent to my happiness this very day: I have dispatched this by a trusty messenger in a hackney-coach, which will wait to carry yourself, your wife and daughter, to a place at some distance from the city, where I have ordered all the necessary preparations to be made, and where I will hasten to meet you, so soon as I shall have dispatched my business with the Senate.

" PAULO GIOVANNO."

Rosomaski presented the letter to Rhodiska, who perused and then gave it to her daughter. As the hand-writing of Giovanni was so strictly imitated that they entertained no suspicion of its being a
E 3 forgery,

forgery, they instantly got ready, seated themselves in the coach, and soon got through the city gates into the country.

Whilst this unfortunate family were thus launching into far greater misfortunes than any which they had before experienced, Gramani was employed in giving to the Senate an account of his mission, which he had no sooner ended than he acquainted them with Gramani's atrocious attempt against the person of one of their representatives, and with what he had heard of his character, which rendered him a disgrace to the station which he filled. A general sentiment of indignation pervaded the breasts of the Senators, who immediately ordered that Gramani should be taken into custody, and seals put on all his papers. Giovanni was no sooner dismissed from the Senate, than he hastened home, in the full and ardent expectation of a lover, who sees himself nearly at the summit of his wishes. He was not a little surprised at the unexpected news of their having all rode out in a hired coach;

coach; but he flattered himself that they could be only gone to make some little purchases, or preparations for the ensuing occasion. When the dinner was announced, he ordered it to be kept back, and messengers to be dispatched to every corner of the city, to find his friends: when night came, and the messengers returned without success, his agitation was extreme. He himself went to give intelligence of this affair to the magistrates, and to inform them of his apprehensions that some mischief had been plotted against his friends. The magistrates issued orders for the strictest search and investigation to be made; and Giovanni returned home once more, hoping to find his friends come back during his absence—but vain were his hopes. That night, which he imagined would have proved the happiest of his life, turned out the most wretched, and he walked the floor during the whole of it, in the most poignant despair. Returning day-light only brought with it some little relaxation to his pangs;

because it enabled him to set on foot fresh enquiries; but that day and the ensuing night passed over as the former ones. Not the least intelligence could be obtained of the Rosomaskis; and what increased his apprehensions of some disaster having befallen them, was, that the whole city rung with the disappearance of Gramani, to the rage and disappointment of his numerous creditors.

On the third day, Giovanni applied to the Senators, to interrogate the Count del Piombino privately before them, and they granted the application; but the Count having heard that Gramani was not to be found, after the strictest search, positively denied that he had any concern in a knowledge of any plot of Gramani's; and added, that he was ready to abide any proof to the contrary. As there were no other evidences against the Count, except the confessions of Guarco, and Sardine, who could only say what he had heard from Gramani, the Senate dismissed the Count, upon his
word

word of honour, to answer any grounds of accusation which might be afterwards found against him: but his guilt did not pass wholly unpunished. The joint creditors of himself and Gramani, as well as all those to whom he was indebted on his own account, no sooner heard some reports of this affair, than they pressed upon him; and though his rank protected his person, yet all his possessions were confiscated to their use: in the end, he was reduced to live upon a small pension, which the Senate allowed him, to avert the disgrace of one of the noblest families in the state.

Giovanno was labouring under the most dreadful paroxysms of rage, indignation, hope, and despair, when it was announced to him that a stranger, who appeared unacquainted with their language, asked for him by name. Giovanno ordered him to be instantly admitted, and was in momentary hopes of news from his friends, when he heard himself addressed in their language, which Paulina had frequently amused her-

self with teaching him. He had, indeed, made a sufficient progress in it, to understand what was said in general conversation, and to make himself comprehended. The stranger had no sooner introduced himself by the name of Ludowico, whom Giovanni had so often heard the Rosomaskis mention as their most generous and firm friend, than he seized his hand, and exclaimed—"Then you bring me news of our common friends?"

"If you mean the Rosomaskis," replied Ludowico, "I expect to find them here."

"Would to Heaven you could!" was all the reply which Giovanni could make.

"Where are they then?—What direful presages are your looks and words!—What new misfortunes have befallen that amiable and persecuted family?"

Giovanni related the affair, with frequent interruptions from his own sobs, and the indignant exclamations of Ludowico against their persecutors. Their attachment to their mutual friends soon endeared these

these two worthy men to each other; and they began, from that time, to plan and execute together every design which promised success in discovering where the Rosomaskis were concealed:—but every one of these proved abortive.

The coach in which the Rosomaskis left Genoa, had got to the distance of about two leagues when it suddenly stopped; both the doors were thrown open, and the 'unfortunate' Rosomaski saw himself surprised, and treated in the very same manner, and equally unprepared for resistance, as when he left Cracow. Two banditti also seated themselves in the carriage with them, enjoined them a similar silence, and ordered the coachman to drive on.—When they arrived on the opposite side of the mountains, the coach stopped again, and another drew on one side of it, into which these once more captives were obliged to remove. The horror of Rhodiska and Paulina, whose eyes had not been blindfolded as were Rosomaski's, was

beyond description, when, on entering it, they immediately recognised the very same carriage that had brought them from Cracow to Genoa. Their journey took up nearly the same time; but instead of keeping on to Cracow, the coachman drove into one of those immense forests, which then skirted the greatest part of Poland. As soon as the coach arrived on the frontiers of that country, the banditti proceeded to blindfold Rhodiska and Paulina also, who made no outcry or lamentation, that they might not increase the pangs of Rosomaski, who, unable to see what was passing, might have suspected the worst. It was about eight o'clock in the morning of the eighth day after their departure from Genoa, when this second dreadful journey drew to an end, and the coach arrived at the entrance of a defile, at the extremity of which was situated the horrid abodes which were the retreat of these banditti, and in which they designed to make their victims end their miserable existence. This spot
was

was so extraordinary, as to require a particular description of it.

On the declivity of one of the Carpathian mountains, which stood at a very small distance from the *embouchure* of the subterranean which Rosomaski had blocked up by thick walls, there was a narrow defile, bordered on all sides by several rugged rocks, which, sometimes terminating in elevated points, and at others inclining their monstrous masses towards each other, till they formed an arch, concealed from the eye a hollow road, which the light of day only illumined at slight intervals. This road was full of bogs and swamps, in which an adventurous explorer, who was unacquainted with their situation, would be inevitably ingulphed; it was known only to banditti, and could serve only their purposes. It was terminated by a wide and deep brook, which it was impossible to ford, but which the banditti crossed over by means of a moveable bridge, which turned round, and entirely disappeared behind

behind a rock when it was not used. A little beyond this rivulet, there was an opening of about twenty feet diameter, which led to some subterranean abysses; these contained a vast mine of salt, which the bowels of the Carpathian mountains concealed, and which appear to have been deposited there from time immemorial by the residence of the sea. When the mine on that side of the mountains had been exhausted, they followed the veins, which branched off to an immense distance. At the epoch when Rosomaski became the proprietor of the Castle of Vistulof, many ages had elapsed since they had exhausted all the reservoirs of salt which had existed in the Carpathian mountains, to the distance of four leagues from Cracow; so that this mine was no longer wrought but for several leagues round the village of Wielitska, from which the salt-works are at present denominated the salt mines of Wielitska. Of this grand phenomenon of natural history, it will be also proper to give

give the following short sketch, to enable those who may be unacquainted with it, to penetrate into the dark scenes which the unfortunate Rosomaskis were yet doomed to go through.

The mines of Wielitska are remarkably profound, as may be supposed from their having been wrought previously to and ever since the year 1252. The kingdom of Poland formerly drew one of the chief sources of its revenue from them; but since the partition of that unhappy country, they now belong to that share which belongs to the House of Austria. After having obtained from the counsellor of the mines permission, in writing, to visit them, it is to be delivered to the centinel, who makes the visitant write down on a register, his name, quality, and country:—after those forms are gone through, he receives and puts on the habit of a miner, which is a coarse woollen frock, to keep off the saline dust from his cloaths. One of the miners receives an order to conduct.

The descent is performed by means of a cable attached to a wheel, which a horse turns round at the mouth of the mine: he arrives at the first stage by a tunnel, a sort of well, eight feet square, whose perpendicular, from the bottom to the top, is about one thousand feet. The four sides of the tunnel are lined with strong planks; to hinder the falling in of the soil, which would otherwise infallibly be the case, as the greatest part is only a fine round sand, of a white or yellowish red colour. Under this sand, which generally prevails throughout Poland, is an argillaceous earth, very friable, and commonly of the colour of the rust of iron, intersected at intervals by beds, three or four inches thick, of a stone, which is a true calcareous spath, thin and leaved like slate.

The manner in which the descent is performed is ingenious, and free from all danger: they form knots in the great cable at certain distances, through which are passed strong staves, on which the person
seats.

seats himself, and is held on by a girth passed under his seat; there is also another girth behind his back, and by holding the rope with his hands, he is supported every way. One or two miners always accompany the visitors, and hold sticks in their hands, to keep the motion of the descent steady, and to prevent their swinging against the sides of the tunnel. The only danger which can possibly attend this mode of descent, is the insufficiency of the cable; which is always carefully inspected, as there are frequently no less than twenty, never thirty, persons, all attached to and suspended by it at once. The descent is very slow, and made in total darkness; so that to a person unaccustomed to this kind of riding, and to such a road, it seems as if he was entering into the regions of darkness.

From the first stage to the lower ones, the descent is made by wooden steps, nine or ten feet wide. At about two hundred feet from the mouth, in the descent to the
first

first stage, there is a curious piece of architecture,* executed in mass of salt, and forming a chapel, which never fails to excite attention: it is dedicated to St. Anthony, and is about thirty feet long, by twenty-four in breadth, and eighteen in height. Not only the steps of the altar, but the altar itself, all the columns which ornament and support the roof, the crucifixes and statues, are of the same substance. On the left hand, at entering, is a statue of the natural size, representing Sigismund, formed of a very transparent salt: there are also, at no great distances, two other chapels; the one dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and the other to St. John.— They say mass in those chapels on certain days of the year, in commemoration of some phenomena, which have anciently happened in those mines.

When arrived at the bottom, the miner presents the visitor with a small lighted lamp, and conducts him through the dark regions to the place where the labourers
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are at work. If left to himself, he would be in danger of losing himself in the multitude of subterraneous roads, galleries, or streets, which intersect each other, and form a sort of very intricate labyrinth.— This precaution is now the more necessary, because, since the House of Austria has been in possession of this treasure, the officers of the mines have been strictly ordered not to communicate in future any plan of the mines. Although the fact has not been yet ascertained, yet there is every reason to believe, that these immense mines communicate with those of Bothnia, (a town about five miles to the east of Wielitska) where they dig the same kind of salt.

The mines of Wielitska are commonly wrought by twelve hundred, and sometimes two thousand, men. In the work season, it may be termed a subterraneous republic, which has its laws, its police, and its chiefs. There are about eighty horses employed in the mines: these animals are fed there,
and

and never leave them but when they are past labour: all these horses lose their sight in a very short space after they are brought thither. Each miner has a hut, which is a square cell, excavated in the salt on each side of the galleries, and closed with a wooden door: it serves him as a depositary for his working implements in the evening, before he leaves the mines.

When these mines were first worked, the labour was performed by persons who were condemned to it, and who were detained there; their wives accompanied them, and their children were born and educated there, as in any school. At present the miners may quit them whenever they please: they descend and ascend by means of ladders, which communicate from the mouth of the mine to its very bottom. If they were obliged to make use of the cable, two hours would not be sufficient for so great a number of labourers.

The arches of these subterraneans are supported by columns or pillars, cut out of the
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the salt, and cased, as well as the galleries, with thick planks, strongly jointed to each other. The quantity of wood employed to support the galleries, is immense. The light of the lamps which illumine this dark abode, is singularly reflected in those places which have been recently excavated; for there are some parts quite obscured by the vapours of the lamps, whilst others maintain a superb brilliancy. A brook which flows over a bed of argillaceous sand, of about three feet and a half in thickness, runs into one of the galleries, and retains nothing of the saline particles: it is perfectly tasteless and fresh, and serves both the labourers and the horses: but the water which filtrates through the arches produces brilliant stalactites, which remain suspended there; and by means of wooden troughs, it is collected into a common reservoir, which they empty with large pails, framed of bullocks hides, at an opening destined for that use alone.—When this water leaves the mine, it
flows

flows into the river Vistula. Since the year 1724, the great scarcity of wood has put a stop to the evaporation of this saline water, which was practised till that time.

The salt is found in these mines, in a continued mass of a prodigious size, and in an almost inexhaustible quantity: its colour is of a greyish white; that which is transparent is of a regular texture, without colour, and in isolated cubes: it is found in beds of clay. All the ornaments of the mine, as tables, seats, &c. are framed of the salt. When they begin to work, the overseer marks out the length and breadth of the blocks which are to be detached from the mass; then the workmen, with wedges, pickaxes, and other instruments, set to work and loosen the blocks, which form square prisms of seven or eight feet in length, by four in breadth, and two in thickness; they call these blocks Batawanes; there have been some instances where they have been forty-eight feet
in

in length. Sometimes the labourers roll these blocks on wooden cylinders to the general depot, near the funnel at the first stage. The road to it is by a plane, gently inclined, framed in a zigzag course through the mines, for the service of the three lower stages. Sledges, laden with hogsheads full of the small pieces of salt, are drawn on this inclined plane to the magazine, by horses: another very strong machine, moved by horses at the mouth of the funnel, draws up these blocks and hogsheads of salt. It is computed, that, one year with another, these mines produce nearly six hundred thousand quintals of fossil gem salt, which is afterwards ground into coarse powder, and distributed throughout the kingdom. These subterraneans are so extensive, that the miners assert that fifteen days would not be more than sufficient to explore them. What is very remarkable is, that these subterraneans are perfectly dry, without the least vapour or damp.

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In one exhausted branch of these famous mines, the existence of which was only handed down by tradition, the unfortunate Rosomaskis were doomed to end their miserable lives. Unfortunately, this tradition, which had been preserved by some ancient naturalist, fell under the observation of the implacable enemy of the Rosomaskis. The catastrophe will discover with what perfidious address he had made use of it, to weave a tissue of the most complicated misfortunes for that interesting family, which could only have been invented by the demon of mischief.

Over the mouth of the funnel or shaft of this subterranean, was a strong windlass, which turned an enormous rope; one end of which supported in the air a platform formed of planks, whose diameter was about eighteen feet. The other end of the rope was fixed at the bottom of the shaft, which was not less than eight hundred feet deep, and which served as an entrance to immense caverns. The mechanism
which

which served to raise or lower this platform, would have merited praise, if it had not been employed in favouring such complicated crimes. At the bottom of this abyss, there had been constructed a machine with wheels, which, when put in motion by two horses, sufficed to perform the movement of the platform either up or down. If one or more of the emissaries of Rosomaski's enemy wanted to descend, they dropped down the shaft a medal of copper, with which they had been furnished for that purpose ; so soon as the signal was perceived, the workmen who conducted the machine at the bottom, set the horses to work, and gave a rotary motion to the great wheel, which raised or let down the platform.

The carriage had stopped in the middle of the defile nearly an hour ; during which interval one of the brigands had hastened forwards to the mouth of the shaft. Having dropped the signal of his wanting to descend, he mounted on the platform, and

was soon lost sight of. At the end of an hour he ascended, having brought up with him every thing which had been judged necessary to pass the intended deception on their unhappy victims: when he returned, the carriage went forwards. When it arrived at the mouth of the funnel, one of the banditti who were on the inside, alighted to second the manoeuvres of his accomplices. The coachman dismounted, and guided the coach and the horses on the platform, which balanced slightly to and fro. When the planks, of which the platform was composed, resounded under the feet of the horses, the Rosomaskis, whose eyes were covered with a bandage, did not doubt that the carriage had entered into a ferry-boat, to pass over some lake or river. To keep up this delusion, which had been foreseen, the banditti imitated the effects of oars on the water, by stirring with a kind of wooden spade, two tuns filled with water, which had been placed on the platform for that purpose. But as the creaking
of

of the machinery under this enormous weight might have made the three captives doubt of their being in a boat. the banditti, to drown the noise which they could not prevent, began to roar out some bacchanalian songs.

The brutal gaiety of those wretches could not fail to increase the sadness and terror of their victims. Deep-fetched sighs and plaintive exclamations often escaped them; but the satellite who remained with them in the carriage, instantly reduced them to silence by the most insulting threats. They did not perceive that chillness which usually seizes those who are descending into deep subterraneans; for though the winter had begun to exercise its rigour, yet these caverns were of the number of those which were milder during that season than the summer. The little humidity which existed in the atmosphere, was attributed to the vapours which exhaled from the water.

When the platform touched the ground,

the coachman re-ascended his box, and drove on. Several men, holding torches, marched before the carriage, which proceeded, with a slow and tedious pace, to the middle of a subterraneous street, twenty feet wide, and arched over at the height of sixty feet. After having travelled about half an hour, the horses stopped again; one of the doors of the carriage was opened, and two men laid hold of Rosmaski, and dragged him away, in spite of the heart-rending cries of Rhodiska, who nearly fainted. Immediately afterwards, they seized both her and her daughter, and made them alight: all the captives were plunged into a state of dreadful suspense, in expectation that their last hour was arrived. Their guards conducted them into a hall of twenty feet square, whose floor, walls, and cieling, were covered with mats; it was furnished with chairs and other articles of rude workmanship, also covered with the same materials, and lighted by several lamps.

Such

Such was the place where the unfortunate Rosomaskis were chained to separate benches. Scarcely were they seated before the bandages were loosened from their eyes, which having been for some time shut to the daylight, could with great difficulty support for some minutes the light of the lamps suspended round the hall. At length their sight cleared up, and the first object which struck them was the detested LANFRANCO !

CHAP. V.



AT this fatal sight, Rosomaski and Rhodiska felt all their blood retire to their hearts, whilst Paulina, who witnessed their

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agitations,

agitations, but was ignorant of the cause of them, read in their countenances all the omens of a speedy annihilation ; the sensations of the whole groupe of the Rosomaskis were a mixture of surprise, indignation, rage, grief, and horror. The African traveller is not more terrified at seeing before him a furious tyger, which, some moments before, he had stretched out on the ground, and imagined he had no longer to dread, than were Rosomaski and Rhodiska at beholding the hated person, whom they had long since thought buried in the waters of the Vistula. At length Rosomaski, collecting all his strength, exclaimed—

“Monster ! the caprice of the waters has then deceived the just fury which armed me against thee !—My greatest grief is at not having succeeded in ridding the world of such a pest to it. Thy vengeance has already commenced ; finish it at a blow ; but let it be only levelled against myself ! Spare my Rhodiska, and her tender daughter.”

“ Dear

"Dear Rosomaski!" said Rhodiska, interrupting him, "cease this language, which can be of no other use than to irritate him the more against you: be not so prodigal of your life, which is more precious to me than mine own. It is I alone who ought to meet his vengeance."

During this debate, Lanfranco looked at them with a smile of cold-blooded cruelty, and with the air of a wretch who, assured of impunity, contemplates his defenceless victims abandoned to his sanguinary rage. He soon broke silence; but before relating what he said, it may not be amiss to sketch the portrait of this malicious fiend. He was of the same age as Rosomaski; of a middle stature; a hard and ill-favoured countenance; eye-brows, black, thick, and joined together; a large nose; a dark complexion, and a malicious smile, which gave his physiognomy an underhand expression, although his features were not without regularity. Altogether, his figure was such as a skilful painter would design,

if he wished to pourtray perfidy. He addressed his captives in these words:

“ I confess, Rosomaski, that my appearance must be a terrible blow to you, and the bitterness which you suffer at seeing me safe and sound, affords me some revenge. I ought not to seek to add any thing to the persecutions which I have already raised against you, and I now yield to shew you some generosity; but I must condemn you to hear by what happy event I escaped that death to which you consigned me.

“ When you threw me over the bridge into the Vistula, although I was previously stunned by the empty pistol which you threw at me, yet the freshness of the water soon brought me to my senses. The desire of saving myself from death lent me new strength, and I retained sufficient presence of mind to endeavour to get out of the current, which was hurrying me rapidly along. By the light of the moon, which, as you may remember, was uncommonly
bright

bright that night, I, after having been carried to a great distance, perceived a small boat, but could see no person in it. I exerted all my remaining strength to reach it, and succeeded; I climbed over its side, and instantly fell down exhausted. I know not how long I remained in that situation, but when I recovered my senses, I beheld the open air above me, and then looked round to see my strange habitation. It was some time before I recovered my recollection of what had passed, and I rose up to see where I was, but to my grief I discovered that either by my exertions to get into the boat, or by the rapidity of the current, she had drifted, and was then going at a great rate down the river. There were no oars to steer my course, and I supposed that the boatmen, when they had left it at anchor, had taken them away to secure them during the night. After some reflection, I put out my hands on one side, and made use of them as a feeble substitute for an oar, to turn the head of the boat towards the

opposite shore. I succeeded, after much exertion, to turn the boat broad-side to the current, but meeting with some obstacle in that situation, the boat instantly upset, filled with water, and sunk. I was again set to swimming, and at length reached the shore, when despair had almost closed my eyes in death: I hastened to a secure place, and instantly fell down again into a state of insensibility. I was luckily discovered by a cottager who was coming to the river side, with a cart to carry gravel to the highway. He humanely neglected his business to assist me; placed me, still senseless, on his cart, and drove me to his cottage.

“When I again came to myself, I found I was lying on his bed, and was no less surprised at this novel situation than I had been before at finding myself in the boat. Not to trouble you with the tedious details of my recovery from my fatigues, I shall pass on to my return to Cracow, which was not till the seventh day after the trial between

us,

us, which then elated you with so much joy, but which has since proved a fruitful source of misfortunes to you. I had taken the precaution to enter the city in disguise, that if, as I imagined it would be, and was really the case, you believed me dead, I might make the vengeance which I meditated fall upon you more surely and unexpectedly. To keep you in your error, I quitted Poland, and retired to Venice; where, having secured all the property which my father had saved, and which was considerable, I entered into partnership with a person who was about to fit out a stout privateer to cruize against the Mahomedan corsairs. The cruize was a most fortunate one, for the privateer captured a fine vessel, in which was the daughter of the Dey of Tetuan, who had embarked on a pilgrimage to Mecca, in consequence of a vow which she had made to their prophet to that effect; during a dangerous fit of sickness. Her father had been loth to suffer her to undertake the

F 6. voyage,

voyage, but the vow was so sacred, that no Mahommedan dared to break or impede the execution of it. As she was attended by several ladies of the first distinction, they had a considerable quantity of jewels with them; these, with their ransom, for we made the Dey acquainted with their situation, produced my partner and myself an immense booty. As we had to send to Tetuan, and wait for the Dey's answer, a considerable time elapsed before the matter was settled. Five years had run their course since I quitted Cracow, and I now began to settle my affairs in Venice, and to think of returning to satiate my revenge, which had never for a moment ceased to gnaw my heart; my hatred to you extended to all the objects of your affection. The phrensied love which I had borne towards Rhodiska was turned to hatred; her charms had entirely lost their former ascendancy over me, and I no longer remembered but her insulting contempt: I wished to have been able, at the same instant,

instant, to have annihilated you both, and to have trampled under foot the detested fruit of your union.

“ I had long been acquainted with the existence of the subterranean, which communicated with the caverns of the Castle of Vistulof, and I was rejoiced at finding that Dorothea and Zokalef had removed thither, and were still in your service. It was the former who decoyed Rhodiska into the tower at Dorbalec, when she was carried off by my emissaries, through the aperture which had been perforated by the latter.— As they had already so well served me for my gold, I made no doubt but they would rejoice to be in my pay, now that I could throw away gold with both hands: I was not deceived. They introduced me, and two of my agents, during that night, in which, but for the timely assistance of your friend Ludowico, I should have sacrificed you all. Having failed in that design, I changed my batteries, and resolved not to shorten the days of my enemies, but to
prolong

prolong their torments. You may now be certain that I alone contrived the affairs of Mr. Vendost and of Theresia; the flight and rescue of Dorothea and Zokalef; the ravishment of your son; your separation from your beloved friends at Cracow; the cruel suspicions which Dorothea's letter occasioned you of the treachery of Ludowico;—"

"Ah, my friend is then pure!" cried Rosomaski; "much-injured Ludowico, forgive me!—I know if you are living you will avenge me!"

This unexpected exclamation, and unabated confidence of Rosomaski, that Ludowico would avenge him, recalled to Lanfranco's mind all the horror of his dream, which had never been erased from his memory. He was agitated; but he endeavoured to conceal his emotions, and continued thus:—

"I have now brought you hither, to separate you from your new friends in Genoa, (for I have constantly had my spies about
5 you,

you, who regularly informed me of every step you took,) and filled up the measure of your sufferings. I am now satisfied; you are at present two hundred leagues from the Castle of Vistulof, in one of the subterranean caverns of a superb castle, which belongs to me, at a small distance from the lake of Guarda. I have caused you to be brought hither, to render you an eyewitness of the joy with which the spectacle of your grief intoxicates me, and to convince you that the lives of yourself and family are in my hands. But take courage; my vengeance is glutted; let Rhodiska and her daughter cease to tremble. If they and you conduct yourselves in a proper manner, you will have reason to applaud yourselves for it, as I shall restore you to liberty."

"Can it be possible?" cried Rhodiska; "are these hopes only held out to us to wound us still deeper with disappointment?"

"Madam,"

“Madam,” continued Lanfranco, “calm your mind, and dry up your tears; I will convince you that I am not so barbarous as you suppose me to be; I am going to leave you for some days, but I have given orders that all your wants shall be provided for; I wish you all three to banish your fears, and to give yourselves up to pleasing hopes.”

Lanfranco then withdrew; and in a few minutes after, two servants brought in a table, covered with refreshments. They freed the three prisoners from the cords which fastened them to the benches, and retired. As soon as Rosomaski saw himself at liberty, he rushed towards the door, but was prevented from passing it by two guards, with fixed bayonets; he returned and seated himself between Rhodiska and Paulina. He wanted nourishment, and he ate; Rhodiska and Paulina followed his example. The two servants re-appeared, prepared two beds, and informed them that their repose would not be interrupted. They then withdrew again.

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In such a state of perplexity, how could the Rosomaskis think of sleeping?—though during eleven revolutions of the earth they had not been on a bed; though a large clock, the only ornament of this subterranean, had announced one in the morning, they refused to give themselves up to sleep. Rosomaski had too much reason to fear the intentions of Lanfranco, and he trembled lest his moderation should only be dissembled.

“Alas!” said he to Rhodiska, “in vain do I seek to lull myself with hopes; the fate which awaits us is but too easily to be seen; we are all three destined to perish together. The monster thirsts for our blood; have you remarked his wild looks and perfidious grin?—so savage a heart does not so soon return to sentiments of humanity.”

“Dear Rosomaski,” replied Rhodiska, “why do you nourish such fatal ideas?—Is it not time that Lanfranco should cease to drink our tears?—Has he not caused us
to.

to shed enough?—What hatred would not be assuaged by the anguish which he has made us suffer?—The most unbounded fury relents, when it no longer meets with any resistance. He gives us hopes of being restored to liberty, and it does not seem to me impossible that he may realize them.—But, perhaps, he expects that we should claim his promise: oftentimes, to induce a bad man to do a generous action, it is only necessary to appear to think him capable of it. I have proved to you, in more than one instance, that I do not want courage; but of what use is it to be courageous without arms to defend myself?—Can I be accused of pusillanimity, if I seek to bend this barbarian?—By braving him, I run the risk of losing for ever my husband, my daughter, and my son, who has been so unexpectedly restored. My own safety is what I regard the least; you know that I would give my life a hundred times, to save those who are far dearer to me. Perhaps some words might serve to tame this tiger.”

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"If I might venture to give an opinion," said Paulina, "I approve of your ideas; when resistance is impossible, it is best to endeavour to disarm one's enemy. My mother's prayers may yet have sufficient power over Lanfranco to induce him to set us free; at least, we can be no worse for the trial."

"My Rhodiska knows very little of the human heart," replied Rosomaski, "if she can imagine that Lanfranco, master of our fate, can treat us with any moderation; but whatever may be his secret intentions, you will never see me humble myself before him. He may sacrifice me; I will never stoop so low as to beg my life from him. It is vain to address the most moving prayers to Lanfranco; they would only fill his heart with a ferocious joy; we should not the less undergo the fate which awaits us."

"Then it is all over with us," cried Rhodiska, throwing her arms round Rosomaski's neck; "our death is certain, if you presage

presage aright; every instant may be the last of our career. Well, whilst I yet hold you in my arms, let me bid you a last adieu!—The days which I have passed with you have been often poisoned by cruel pangs; but they have been mingled with such soft delight, that my memory has preserved only the traces of the pleasures. A motive of consolation has just moderated my grief; I figure to myself that human force can never break the chain of two hearts united as ours, and that the union of our souls is immortal.”

At these words, Rosomaski could not refrain from being dissolved into tenderness. His quivering lips could not bring forth a sound; but he clasped Rhodiska to his heart, as he exhaled the most profound sighs. Paulina was no less affected at this pathetic scene; and bursting into a flood of tears, she ran to divide their embraces. These sallies of tenderness were often repeated, till, tired with weeping and groaning, they all three remained motionless and

and silent, holding each other by the hand. Their excessive alarms did not permit them to sob, whilst their despondency prevented them from continuing their discourse. The return of morning found them in the same attitude.

The two servants then entered the room, and after they had replenished the dying lamps, they placed before them an elegant repast. When they had finished eating, the servants brought them linen and changes of cloaths, and seemed uncommonly attentive to anticipate all their wants.—

After all, they placed on the table pens, ink, paper, and some books, as if their master wished to offer those wretched captives some objects to distract their grief. They were, however, little inclined to give themselves up to such employments: persuaded that they had very little time to live together, it seemed, by their impatience, as if they dreaded lest a single moment should be lost to their mutual endearments.

When the clock had sounded two hours
after

after noon, the two servants served up a plentiful and choice dinner, and showed them the same marked attentions as during breakfast-time. The three captives knew not what to think of such conduct ; though the ferocity of Lanfranco appeared to them to have been softened, yet they were not sufficiently tranquillized to be able to enjoy sleep, and they passed another wakeful night.

The next day, Lanfranco made his appearance at the door of the hall, and said to them—" Courage, banish your alarms ; your lives are not my aim."—Rhodiska was preparing to entreat him to set them at liberty, but he instantly disappeared.

" Dear Rosomaski," said she, " you see that we never ought to, give ourselves up to despair. Without doubt, the heart of Lanfranco has opened itself to more humane sentiments : satiated with vengeance, he must be weary of tyrannizing over unfortunate persons, whom, in spite of his rage, he cannot help esteeming. I embrace,

brace, with transport, the hope of seeing you free, and of soon possessing our young Ladislaus; do you also endeavour to adopt my ideas of the subject, which are more consoling than your own."

The calmness of Rhodiska at length began to produce a similar effect on Rosomaski. The following night he ventured to sleep, and Rhodiska and Paulina followed his example: slumber had been so long a stranger to them, that they all enjoyed a sound and undisturbed repose, which somewhat re-established their exhausted strength. When they awoke, they found themselves refreshed, and more tranquil. Rhodiska began to prepare a letter to Lanfranco.— She intreated him, with a noble dignity, no longer to prolong her own punishment, and that of the objects of her dearest attachment. Whilst she was writing, Rosomaski traversed the hall with hasty strides, muttering some inarticulate sounds, and lifting up his hands and eyes towards Heaven. As for Paulina, she cast her eyes
on

on a book, but she was secretly employed in fervent ejaculations. When Rhodiska had finished her letter, she read it to Rosomaski, who could not but admire the address with which she had contrived to ally dignified sentiments to the language of solicitation and sensibility: her epistle would have been capable of moving any but the most obdurate and callous heart, and of awakening sentiments of generosity in a soul the most greedy of the ferocious enjoyment of vengeance. Rhodiska charged one of the servants to deliver her message to Lanfranco; she was in hopes that he would not delay to show himself; but that day and the next passed over without his making his appearance.

At length, Lanfranco entered the hall, accompanied by four satellites. "Madam," said he, "I have given you time to recover your sunk spirits; now I am going to enter into an explanation with you, and to give you an answer to your letter: but what I have to say to you is so important, that

that I am constrained to remove from you, for a little time, your husband and daughter."

"Why," replied Rhodiska, "all this secrecy, which fills me with terror?"

"Be not alarmed," said Lanfranco, "they will come to no harm."

"Preserve me, Heaven!" ejaculated Rhodiska; "what can he want with me?— they drag my husband and daughter away from me; what will become of them?"

In an ecstasy of grief, she threw herself before the satellites who had seized Rosomaski and Rhodiska, and were carrying them away; but Lanfranco stopped her; she consumed herself in vain struggles; she gave a loud cry, and fell into his arms, repeating the name of Rosomaski.

Lanfranco, assisted by the two servants, replaced her on the seat whence she had just risen, and gave her what assistance her situation required. As soon as she began to give signs of returning sensibility, he quitted the hall, lest the sight of the author of so much violence should cause her to relapse.

Rhodiska opened her eyes, but not beholding her husband and daughter, she dissolved into tears, and cried out—"Alas! where are they?—the cruel Lanfranco at this instant perhaps makes them suffer a thousand torments; I know not if ever I shall see them again. Oh my distracted heart!"

She was interrupted by the two servants, who had placed on the table the evening's repast; she asked them news of Rosomaski and Paulina, but they made her no reply; and their silence augmented her perplexity. She refused every kind of nourishment: the hour of rest arrived, but Rhodiska was too wretched to be able to close her eyes for an instant. She passed a most horrible night.

CHAP. VI.

THE next day, Lanfranco again offered himself to her view; he accosted her with a gentle and half smiling countenance.—“Charming Rhodiska,” said he, “cease to look upon me with terror; entertain a more favourable opinion of me; I am ready to grant whatever you have required from me.”

“Well, then,” replied Rhodiska, “restore to my panting heart my husband and my daughter; set us all three at liberty: are you not yet tired of tyrannizing over your victims?”

“I aspire only to confound you by my
c 2 generosity,”

generosity," said Lanfranco; "I am ashamed of having harboured the idea of destroying you, and of having vexed you with a thousand cruel persecutions; I would wish to convince you of my sincere repentance."

"If you cannot repair your past crimes," said Rhodiska, "at least you may avoid the commission of any more."

"I ought to appear in your eyes," said Lanfranco, "more worthy of compassion than of hatred; the shocking excesses to which I have given way, have been solely occasioned by the delirium lighted in my breast by an unfortunate passion. I have only hated you so much, because I have loved you too well."

"Would to Heaven," exclaimed Rhodiska, "you had never conceived a passion whose effects have been so fatal!"

"Since I have beheld you again," added Lanfranco, "I have felt all its strength revive; I burn to dry up your tears."

"Nothing can be more easily accomplished,"

plished," said Rhodiska; "you know my wishes; why do you delay to comply with them?"

"I am impatient to subscribe to your demands," replied Lanfranco, "but I wish to know before hand, whether you will subscribe to mine?"

"Speak," said Rhodiska, "of what nature is it?—Do you exact, that, once restored to liberty, I should observe the most profound silence on the means which you have employed to drag us into the subterraneans of your castle, on the shore of the lake of Guarda?—I swear that neither myself, my husband, daughter, nor any person in our name, shall ever reveal any thing of what has passed, since our being carried away from Genoa."

"No, Madam, that is not the object at which I aim."

"Explain yourself then, without disguise, and do not make a pastime of my grief."

"Well, then, if, in exchange for the liberty of your husband and daughter, and

in recompence of your own deliverance, I should ask you for a trifling sacrifice, which would cost you nothing, which is not of a nature to injure your husband, and which would remain for ever a secret to all the world, would you consent to grant it?"

"I understand you, wretch; you make me tremble."

"Well, Madam, since all disguise is useless, I declare, that in seeing you, more charming, more interesting than ever, I have felt the violent passion with which you had before inspired me, and which was transformed into hatred, rekindle into love."

"Convert it, then, into hatred again!—I prefer it to your love."

"In vain you abhor my transports; I cannot master them: I love you to madness; I must conquer your aversion, or die!"

"Monster! no, it is I who must die."

"Madam, you are in my power; you cannot escape me; but I am not willing
to

to owe any thing to violence; I wish, at least, to find in you the appearance of consent."

"I will consent to death first."

"Madam, you brave me then!—Think on what I have in my power."

As he said these words, Lanfranco rolled his inflamed eyes; his countenance exhibited fury and phrenzy; the veins of his forehead and temples were swollen; his cheeks were on fire; his parched lips frothed; he was horrible to the aspect.—Rhodiska retreated with deadly fear at the frightful change which was effected in the countenance of Lanfranco, and fell back on the bench on which she was seated before the beginning of this fatal conversation. She did not faint, however, either because the dread of imminent danger gave her new strength, or the frequency of the terrible agitations which she had lately undergone, had attenuated the violence of their effects.

As soon as Lanfranco saw Rhodiska on
c 4 the

the point of falling into a swoon, he withdrew in silence, lest she should sink under the excess of her grief. He sent an old woman, whose business it was to superintend the other females who were employed in the mines to repair the cloaths of the labourers, to keep her company, and to give her every necessary assistance. He did not again visit her during that day.

An abundant effusion of tears relieved the oppressed heart of Rhodiska. In spite of the horror of her situation, her extreme lassitude caused her to drop into a sleep, which renewed her strength: but on the following day, Lanfranco again came to renew all her anguish.

"Madam," said he, in a softened tone, "I have given you time to reflect on my proposal. You know what I require; if the rigidity of your principles urges you to refuse it, reason ought to dictate acquiescence to you."

"Wretch! dare you renew your infamous offer?"

"Your

"Your obstinacy only irritates my passion, and redoubles my delirium. Yield to my proposal, and at that price you will save your husband, your daughter, and yourself; otherwise, tremble."

"Barbarian! take my life; you shall never deprive me of my honour and my own esteem."

"What blind prejudice retains you!—The ransom which I demand is easily granted; no trace of it will remain; no mortal will know it."

"I shall know it, and that will be sufficient. I am exposed to your outrages, but you cannot command my will; my heart shall be ever pure; it is not in your power to tarnish it."

"Your resistance is vain; till now, I have only tried means of persuasion, but I shall soon have recourse to more efficacious methods. Frantic woman! you hasten to destruction; whilst there is yet time, avert the dreadful misfortunes which yet threaten you. I once more leave you to your reflections."

Lanfranco then retired ; but some hours afterwards, he returned, followed by two satellites. " Madam," said he, presenting to her a written paper, " here is the oath which you are to take, that you will, of your own accord, remain with me one month ; if you punctually observe it, you shall save yourself and yours. Hasten to sign this writing, and consecrate it by an oath."

" Ferocious man !" replied Rhodiska, " your threats inspire me with horror, but they cannot impress me with fear. Do not think that I will ever pollute my mouth with so horrible an oath ; my principles are immutable ; there is no human force which shall make me abandon them."

" Friends !" cried Lanfranco, " you know whither you are to conduct her."

Instantly the two satellites seized Rhodiska, whose struggles were of no avail.—As soon as they quitted the hall, they extinguished all the lamps which gave a feeble light to the adjacent places. They walked in impenetrable darkness, which increased

increased the terror which seized Rhodiska, in spite of her natural intrepidity. She expected every instant to be precipitated into some abyss, and she was satisfied to think that death would end her sufferings, and prevent her disgrace: but her terrors were excessive when she was conducted into another hall, which was hung all over with black, and on all sides lighted by funeral torches. At one of the two extremities was dressed out a sort of tribune, round which were placed some chairs. At the other end was raised a kind of scaffold, covered with a hearse cloth, on which was a block of wood, and a large scymitar.

Whilst Rhodiska beheld this menacing apparatus, with an eye darkened by the shades of death, a door opened close to the scaffold, and she saw three men enter, leading in a wretch, who, with his forehead bound with a bandage, advanced with slow and painful steps, dragging along an immense load of chains. "Oh, Heavens!" cried Rhodiska, "it is Rosomaski whom

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they

they are going to destroy!"—Rosomaski knew Rhodiska's voice; he spoke to her in the most endearing accents. Most other women in such a situation, would not have retained their senses; but whether that Rhodiska had a strength of mind superior to the most cruel blows of fortune, or that her perplexity on account of Rosomaski's approaching fate, had lent her an extraordinary energy, she struggled to free herself from those who held her, and to ascend the scaffold to throw herself into the arms of her husband, and die with him. Being unable to accomplish her wishes, a spontaneous emotion caused her to throw herself at the feet of Lanfranco, and to say to him—"Mercy, mercy for my husband, and let me die instead of him."

"Madam," replied Lanfranco, "you already know at what price you may save his life; I consent to suspend the blow till you come to a final determination. Take that wretch aside," added he, addressing the three persons who held Rosomaski, "she appears desirous to avert his fate."

"Rhodiska,"

“Rhodiska,” cried Rosomaski, “your honour is far dearer to me than life; yield not, and I shall die blessing you; if your dishonour pay the price of my life, I shall only live to despise and hate you.”

“Then death for us both!” cried Rhodiska; “I will never live to be hated by Rosomaski.”

“Then death be it!” said Lanfranco; “lay him on the block.”

They obeyed the order—but Lanfranco once more suspended the uplifted scymitar, and presented the fatal oath to Rhodiska. She leaned forwards, and inclined her head on her hands, either in profound reflection, in silent ejaculations, or in dismay at the horrible spectacle which was before her.—In this attitude she gave the most piteous groans, and seemed almost to have forgotten the place in which she was. After some moments had passed in a dread silence, Lanfranco cried—“Pronounce the word, and sign the writing, or your husband is dead!”—Rhodiska still kept silent,

as

as if to hear the final commands of Rosomaski; but he spake not. Another pause ensued—"The time is past, then," added Lanfranco; "it is now too late; contemplate your work and your punishment."—At that instant, the block resounded under the blow of the scymitar. Rhodiska raised her head, and saw—but a happy swoon prevented her instantaneous distraction. If, in the features covered with crimson streams she could have doubted of recognising the real Rosomaski, yet the certainty of having heard him speak just before, his shape and dress, were sufficient to convince her that she had no longer a husband.

Lanfranco caused his emissaries to raise up Rhodiska, and convey her back to the matted hall, whence they had brought her. The old woman was ordered to remain near her, and never to quit her till she was out of all danger. During more than six hours, Rhodiska continued motionless, and almost cold; at length she gave signs of returning animation; but she was in a
burning

burning fever, which reduced her to the last extremity of weakness and languor; her tongue, glued to her burning palate, pronounced only the name of Rosomaski.— Sometimes, in the persuasion that he was in some adjoining room, she uttered loud exclamations, and seemed surprised and inconsolable, at not seeing him appear; at others, recollecting that he had just perished, she shed bitter tears, and invoked death.

“ Oh, dear and unhappy husband !” said she, “ are you dead, and I still living ?—I have no other consolation than the hope of soon following you to the grave. Why, when the barbarian cut the thread of your life, did he not sever mine also ?—Life is odious to me, deprived of my Rosomaski ! —You have carried with you the principle of my existence, and the source of my happiness. Just Heaven ! hasten to terminate my career, which is embittered by the gall of despair !”

Rhodiska refused to take any nourishment, and she was unable to enjoy repose.

During

During three days, she was every moment at the point of giving her last sigh. At length, her old nurse prevailed upon her to take some food. Two days afterwards, she was less weak, but her grief had not lost any thing of its strength.

“Death,” she exclaimed, “will not then listen to my prayer!—Whilst I call upon it, I feel that my hopes of its relief have abandoned me. Death is in my heart, but it has not been able to break the resources of life. How many wretches have died through grief, who have not been struck with so deep a wound!—Must I survive such terrible evils?—If Providence had not forbidden mankind to take away what it is not in their power to give, I should have freed myself from the burthen of life, ere this time.”

Her voice then became inarticulate, and was interrupted by sobs and groans. Her nurse constrained her to take some restoratives; and, fatigued by her painful convulsions, she, insensibly, fell into a doze.

In the mean time, Lanfranco was reproaching

proaching himself with having had recourse to such atrocious means to force Rhodiska to consent. "Madman, that I am !" cried he, "whither does my blind phrenzy hurry me?—I burn to possess this woman ; and yet to subdue her, I execute such terrible plans as nearly put an end to her by grief and horror. I have exposed myself to the danger of seeing my victim escape from my transports, and deceive my thirst for vengeance by dying. I will change my batteries ; what need have I of her consent?—Will it be less satisfactory to me to owe my enjoyment to force?—She is at my mercy—why should I delay my gratification?—I long to glut my vengeance ; and shall I not be sufficiently revenged, when I shall have subdued the resistance of this prude by force?—Yes, the die is cast ; as soon as her health shall be re-established, I will consummate my triumph."

Such were the projects which engaged Lanfranco, when his meditations were broken through, by the entrance of the Jew, Ishmael, his confidant and principal accomplice.

police. Ishmael was about forty-five years of age. Gain was his favourite passion, the main spring of all his actions, and the center of all his schemes; this vile inclination was apparent through all his appearance. A face lean and colourless, sharp twinkling eyes, and a meagre frame, denoted that the demon of avarice constantly resided with him. By means of the considerable loans which Lanfranco had made him, he had been enabled to farm the mines at Wielitska: Lanfranco contented himself with small interest; and in return for this important service, he had permitted him to turn to the advantage of his schemes of vengeance the communication existing between the mines of Wielitska and the subterraneans, to which access was had by the funnel in one of the Carpathian mountains. At the bottom of the mines of Wielitska, there were subterraneous passages, which ran about five leagues from north to south, quite into the heart of the Carpathian mountains.

Lanfranco had judged that the situation
of

of these subterraneans was adapted to the execution of his designs. As he was possessed of a prodigious fortune, and inflamed with an insatiate resentment, he had spared no sacrifice, to exercise upon the proprietors of the Castle of Vistulof a terrible vengeance, and to make a lasting memento of it. By gratifying the avarice of Ishmael with the support of his own riches, he had secured to himself the means of enveloping in mystery the preparation of all his manœuvres, and of pursuing them successfully.

As soon as the reading of an old book of natural history had revealed to Lanfranco the existence of a chain of caverns, extending under ground from the mines of Wielitska to the Carpathian mountains, he entered into an agreement with Ishmael, who, dazzled by the enormous profits which the farming of these immense mines held out to him, readily closed with all the proposals of Lanfranco. It was by the route of the mines of Wielitska, which have
several

several mouths, at the distance of only four leagues from Cracow, that Lanfranco had introduced whatever he had need of, to render practicable the funnel existing in the center of the Carpathian mountains, and to form for his accomplices a habitable retreat in these caverns.

The Jew Ishmael, in quality of farmer-general of the mines of Wielitska, had the sole command in those dark abysses, and seemed like another Pluto. He had nearly two thousand workmen at his command; he had indicated to Lanfranco those among them whom he thought the easiest to be corrupted, and the properest, by their audacity, pliability, and cunning, to become the most useful agents. Lanfranco, to whom expence was no object, provided that he could satisfy the atrocious caprices of his vindictive humour, was sure, by dispersing gold in quantities, to find those vile instruments whose devotion is boundless, and secrecy to be depended on. No person, except his accomplices, knew that the

the mines of Wielitska, situated at four leagues from Cracow, were only a continuation of another mine, exhausted from time immemorial, and to which there still existed an entrance in the midst of one of the Carpathian mountains.

When Lanfranco and his agents wanted to pass from the known part into that which was concealed from every person except themselves, they did it during the interval when all the other workmen, having desisted from their labours, had retired into the subterraneous cells. Lanfranco, to deceive more easily all the researches which might be set on foot after him, had quitted his true name; and as he spoke the Slavonic dialect, he passed for a Russian, named Dolgorucki. It was he who was the companion of Giovanno, when they fell into the hands of the banditti, in the mountains adjacent to Genoa. Having been informed by his spies, that the Rosomaskis were about to enjoy greater happiness and splendor than ever,
by

by uniting their daughter to one of the richest men in Genoa, his vengeance was again roused, and he determined to bring them back to his retreat in the Carpathian mountains, and to convert all their hopes of joy into incredible sufferings. He set off in person to direct his emissaries, and had left them on the road behind, to wait till he should have found some means of decoying the Rosomaskis out of Genoa, when Giovanni fell into company with him. Whilst with the banditti, Lanfranco no sooner heard the name of Gramani mentioned, than he paid the most profound attention, without appearing to do so, because Gramani, whom he had accidentally fallen in with after his flight from Venice, and engaged in his service, was the chief of his emissaries who had carried off the Rosomaskis from Cracow to Genoa, and it was he who remained there to act as his spy upon all their actions. It will be necessary to explain how this matter was brought about.

When Gramani had left his comrade,
Boccanegra,

Boccanegra, sleeping in the fields, after their flight from Venice, he travelled all night, taking the precaution of steering clear of that city. As he stopped at an obscure inn on the road side, he fell into company with Lanfranco, who was then on his way to Cracow, to pursue his schemes of vengeance against the Rosomaskis.— They entered into conversation, and Lanfranco was not long in finding out that Gramani's talents and disposition were suited to his purposes; he made him a proposal, which was accepted. He was not deceived in Gramani's abilities, who was the chief contriver of all the mischiefs hurled at their victims from the caverns of the Carpathian mountains. After their vile projects had compelled Rosomaski to part with his estates, Lanfranco wished to be at liberty to appear abroad, which he did not dare to do whilst Rosomaski was in the neighbourhood; he therefore determined on having him removed from Cracow: a consultation was held, and Genoa agreed

agreed on as the place of exile. All the necessary preparations having been made, Gramani was sent on before: as he lived splendidly on the money with which Lanfranco had supplied him, he was not long in making an acquaintance with some of the dissolute part of the nobility of Genoa, through whose interest he obtained a place in the magistracy; soon after he married. He did not fail to keep an eye upon the Rosomaskis, of whom he constantly remitted intelligence to his employer; but when they removed to Giovanni's, he suddenly lost sight of them, and imagined they had left the city. As he looked upon himself fully established in Genoa, and wished to continue to draw the sums which Lanfranco from time to time remitted him, he determined to conceal their disappearance, and to give their enemy feigned accounts of them, which he did. At length, by his acquaintance with Justiniano, he again very unexpectedly fell in with the Rosomaskis. It was then that he first began to

entertain designs against the honour of Rhodiska; but finding them all prove abortive, he resolved to persecute them, to satiate his own vengeance, as well as that of Lanfranco. Losing all hopes of triumphing over the fidelity of Rhodiska, and instigated by the Countess del Piombino, to attempt the ruin of Paulina, he was the person who contrived and executed the scheme of carrying her off by night. As he was well known to the guards of the gate leading to the harbour, he easily obtained a passage, by feigning some orders from the state, and conveyed her to a bark which he had in waiting. - All traces of pursuit being thus cut off, he caused her to be conveyed, in the manner we have already related, to an old castle, which had been long uninhabited by any except a gang of coiners, who occupied the subterraneans, and with whom he was leagued. It was from this source that he principally drew his means of living so splendidly: he had furnished the apartments in which

Paulina was confined, for the purpose. The secret staircase and passage, leading to the subterraneans, had been previously made, for the purpose of a communication with his gang of coiners, and to facilitate their escape, in case the outlet into the country should be discovered. Gramani did not leave Genoa on the night Paulina was carried off, in the expectation that Rosomaski, unacquainted with his treachery, would apply to him as a magistrate to assist in recovering her: he was not deceived; he affected to search the city on the next morning, and then, under pretence of scouring the environs, he thought he might pursue his plan in perfect security. He followed Paulina, and when about to perpetrate his crime at midnight, he was received in a ruder manner than he expected; the hand which struck him was that of Lucinda, whom the reader may remember to have acted a principal part in the farce which Gramani played off upon Rhodiska, and for which he had so well rewarded

rewarded her. Lucinda, by an intrigue with one of the turnkeys, had procured her escape from the dungeon, which was no difficult matter, as no attention was ever paid to those wretches, who were supposed to be immured for life. As Lucinda was a thorough bred Italian, her first thoughts were turned upon vengeance; she was about to disclose to Rhodiska the whole train of Gramani's villany; but reflecting that she could not appear as a witness, without a certainty of being again confined, and cut off from all hopes of escaping, she dropped that project: it then occurred to her to get into the service of the Piombinos, with whom she knew Gramani was particularly intimate, and to wait for some opportunity of repaying his treachery. She easily effected her purpose; for as the Piombinos were fonder of having a numerous suite than of paying them, the situation was not much courted. She disguised herself as much as possible, but there was little occasion for it, as none but the male domestics

ever waited upon the company. She had no sooner gained a footing in the house, than she endeavoured, by all possible means, to engage the confidence of Moceniga; by incessantly flattering her vanity and caprices, she carried that point. She was entrusted with the Piombinos' designs upon Giovanni, and their enmity to the Rosomaskis for having thwarted them.

When Gramani's plot for carrying off Paulina was ripe for execution, she learned it from Moceniga: she was overjoyed, and now thought it her time to strike the wished-for blow. As Gramani was to be supplied with a certain number of female domestics for his purposes, by the Piombinos, Lucinda prevailed upon Moceniga to have her included in the number, by pretending an inveterate hatred to the Rosomaskis, and a strong desire to see her, who had the insolence to rival her mistress, humbled. When Lucinda and the other females arrived at the castle, which was to be the scene of this horrid plot, one of
Gramani's

Gramani's agents instructed them in the existence of the secret passage; because Gramani had ordered, in case any unfortunate discovery should be made, and a pursuit should be set on foot after Paulina, that they should all retire into the subterraneans, and leave the upper part of the castle, as if no one had ever been in it.—As Gramani did not follow them on the first night of Paulina's being brought to the castle, Lucinda did not think proper to give her any alarm at that time; but on the second night, finding every thing ready for her destruction, she put herself in action, and prevented it, as has been already related. When Paulina was seized by the gang of coiners in the subterraneans, Lucinda hastened on; but finding herself seized by a rude arm, which she was convinced was not her companion's, she again made use of her poniard, and the dying groan which was uttered by the person she struck, was that which Paulina heard soon after she was separated from

her, and which she believed to be that of her intrepid companion. Lucinda groped her way out of the subterranean, and fled, with the satisfaction of thinking she had amply satiated her vengeance: she was deceived, however; Gramani was not mortally wounded, neither had surprise bereaved him of his policy. Dreading a repetition of the blow, he remained motionless till his executioner was out of hearing, when he crawled to his assistants, who helped to staunch his wound in the best manner they were able. On the next day he got himself conveyed to a neighbouring village, where his people, who had received their cue from him, carried him to a surgeon's, as an unfortunate person who had been assassinated, and whom they had found in the road. The surgeon dressed his wound—declared it not mortal; and as Gramani was anxious to return to Genoa, that his absence might not create suspicion, the surgeon attended him thither in a carriage. Gramani's return, and the

the excuse which he had invented for his livid appearance, stifled all suspicions of his villany for a while. He was tolerably recovered from the effects of his wound, when Giovanni's arrival in Genoa again menaced him with the punishment due to his crimes. But his hour of retribution was not yet come, and he was again rescued from impending danger, by the interposition of the feigned Dolgorucki, or Lanfranco.

To return from this digression, if it may be so termed, which is absolutely necessary for the information of the reader, Lanfranco changed his dress and manners, together with his name. Not contented with Gramani and the agents whom he had procured among the workmen of the mines, he had contrived to seduce Dorothea and Zokalef; who, after having served his perfidious machinations in the house of their master until they dreaded detection, had followed him into his subterraneous retreat.

CHAP. VII.

SUCH were the engines which Lanfranco had put in motion, and whose succour he had procured himself chiefly by his compact with Ishmael. This last, who was swayed only by his thirst for riches, far from raising any obstacles to the diabolical manœuvres of Lanfranco, had contributed to their success by all the means which his post of farmer-general of the mines of Wielitska had placed at his command — Nine years had already elapsed since he had enjoyed that title, and all the advantages attached to that vast undertaking. — With the assistance of the considerable
sums

sums which he had received from Lanfranco, he had discharged to Government the half of the money which he had contracted to pay for them. The time of making up the other half was near at hand, and that was the cause of his visit; he came to claim from Lanfranco the bills of exchange which the latter had promised to furnish him with, when the time of payment arrived. Ahmael had no reason to complain of Lanfranco's want of punctuality.

When he had in his hands what flattered his thirst of gain, he asked Lanfranco if his plans of vengeance continued to be executed to his wishes?—and was answered in the affirmative. He then testified a desire of beholding, once, at least, that astonishing woman, whose beauty had caused in him such impetuous transports, and whose character had displayed so much heroism. Lanfranco consented to it, with some difficulty; but he observed, that Rhodiska, not being yet recovered, they would, perhaps, cause a relapse in her, if they appeared.

appeared before her without some precautions. He then proposed to Ishmael, that they should enter the chamber when she was in a deep sleep.

Lanfranco entrusted their design to the old woman who watched Rhodiska. Some hours afterwards, she caused him to be informed that Rhodiska, fatigued by her extreme agitation, had just yielded to sleep, and that weakness would render her difficult to wake. Ishmael and Lanfranco entered the room on tiptoe, the latter holding a dark lanthorn in his hand. They approached the bed, and the old woman gently drew aside the curtains. Rhodiska slept peacefully: her countenance, on which the traces of grief were apparent, had contracted that melancholy expression which touched the soul, and made Rhodiska amends for the loss of her colour. She appeared like beauty oppressed by misfortune, and consoled by innocence. Ishmael was struck with admiration; he could not refrain from muttering—"Oh, Heavens! how beautiful she is!"

Lanfranco,

Lanfranco, perceiving that the sight of Rhodiska made a lively impression on Ishmael, said to him—"Let us hasten away; if she should awake, the sight of us would not fail to throw her into another fit, which might endanger her life."

Ishmael quitted the spot with regret; but he did not leave the image of Rhodiska behind him. He took leave of Lanfranco; but instead of going to his usual residence, he returned to the vicinity of the hall in which Rhodiska reposed. The sentinels, who knew his power, were easily gained by some gratuity, as was also the old nurse. He waited with impatience till the next morning, when being informed that Rhodiska was awake, he entered the room.—The old woman had trimmed all the lamps, and Rhodiska was surprised to behold a stranger, who approached with a timid and submissive air.

"Hapless victim of the cruel Lanfranco," said Ishmael, "be not alarmed; you behold a man who burns to give you free-

H G

dom.

dom. A monster has just deprived you of your husband ; he has reserved you for new sufferings : place your confidence in me, and I will rescue you from the evils which threaten you."

" Generous unknown man !" replied Rhodiska, " I willingly accept the services which you offer me, and I flatter myself that your only aim is to succour oppressed innocence."

" Madam," replied Ishmael, " I think your heart is too grateful to set a price upon my services ; with your attractions, it is easy to give proofs of it, which cannot fail of being agreeable."

" What strange language !" said Rhodiska, disguising her feelings, and affecting a smile ; " if you would not have me detest you, do not let me fear to find in you a second Lanfranco."

" No, Madam," replied Ishmael, " I abhor the cruelties of Lanfranco, and shall never imitate him. I love you, it is true ; but my passion shall never be your punish-

ment: I ask only that of you which no longer belongs to any mortal, since you have lost your husband. If I deliver you from the tyrannical power of Lanfranco, you surely will not refuse it to me: I hope to gain your good will by my generous proceedings, and to determine you to pass some time with me, before you return to Cracow; at least, that you will permit me to follow you thither."

Rhodiska, who saw no other hopes of freeing herself from the horrid attempts of Lanfranco, thought herself perfectly justified in using artifice with a man who wished to take advantage of her misfortunes. She commanded her resentment so far as to look pleasantly at this Israelitish admirer, who was a sufficient antidote to a tender passion, and said—"Deliver me hence; and when I am safe at Cracow, you shall have no reason to complain of my want of gratitude."

Ishmael was so transported, that he was about to throw himself on his knees, when
the

the door suddenly opened, and Lanfranco rushed in, and acquainted him that he had something of the greatest importance to communicate to him that instant. The motive alledged by Lanfranco was only a pretext: ignorant that Ishmael was with Rhodiska, he came to her chamber, resolved no longer to delay force to obtain what he would rather have owed to her consent. At the sight of Ishmael, he instantly conjectured what had been the object of his visit; but he had the precaution to dissemble the passion which inflamed himself, and had urged him to approach Rhodiska. He drew Ishmael away from the presence of Rhodiska, that she might not be a witness of the violent debates which, he foresaw, must ensue, and which would have discovered to her all the hidden resources of his machinations.

As soon as Lanfranco saw himself alone with Ishmael, he said to him in a passionate strain—

“ Ishmael, I have overheard all your
dialogue

dialogue with Rhodiska ; you have spoken of me as of a vile wretch ; you have proposed to steal her out of my hands, if she would consent to remain in thine. Ungrateful man ! is this the recompence for all the services which I have rendered you ? — You owe me your fortune ; without my support, would you have been rich enough to undertake so considerable a farm, and so lucrative an undertaking ? — You deserve that I should reclaim the immense sums which I have lent you."

" Lanfranco, or Dolgorucki," replied Ishmael, " it well becomes you, indeed, to tax me with ingratitude ; I know not who of the two has the greatest right to make the other a like reproach. It is to me that you owe the arsenal of your vengeance, and the asylum which shelters you with impunity ; it is I who have furnished you with the greater part of the ministers of your fierce revenge : to prove my devotion to you, I have abased myself even, to assist you in the execution of your most criminal

criminal enterprises. You have lent me gold; but I have exposed my life for you. Is it not you who still owe me a return?—Why do you pretend to forbid me from carrying my views on Rhodiaka?—Have I not as much right over her as you can have yourself?—Your threats set me upon my guard; I know how to resent them, if you persist in your insolent demands. Reflect that your fate is in my hands; if I say but the word, you die by the hands of the public executioner.”

“Traitor!” replied Lanfranco, inflamed with rage; “dare you thus brave me?—It is for you to tremble, who know all the refinement of my vengeance: if I did not command my passion——”

Lanfranco could not utter another word, and he withdrew into his private room.—He there began to reflect on the cruel altercation which had just arisen between himself and Ishmael. He passed in review all the numerous means which Ishmael possessed of destroying him. Alarmed at
seeing

seeing that he appeared to stand forth the defender and lover of Rhodiska, he fell into the most dreadful disquietudes; but his greatest punishment would have been to have left his vengeance imperfect. He then began to feel a just retaliation of those sufferings which he had so unjustly heaped upon the Rosomaskis, and they were, though unconscious of it, not a little revenged.

At the moment when the wretched Rosomaski had been dragged from the presence of Rhodiska, Lanfranco had seized all his papers, and, amongst the rest, a packet addressed to Rhodiska, on which was superscribed these words—"Not to be opened till after my decease."—Lanfranco hastily opened it, and discovered in the contents, wherewith to prepare new tortures for Rhodiska and Rosomaski. In his present torture, Lanfranco recollected it with a malignant pleasure, which almost stifled all his dread of the consequences of Ishmael's conduct.

"If

"If the Jew Ishmael," said he, "preserves Rhodiska from the attempt which I design to make upon her, I have still other resources to fill up the measure of that vengeance which I meditate against her, and all the objects of her affection.—What need I care about the possession of a woman?—It is much more satisfactory to taste the lasting pleasures of a complicated and ingenuously-executed vengeance. Yes, my plan is worthy of me, of my fury, and of my imagination, terribly inventive. Tremble all ye whom I abhor; I will still charm myself with your tears; you, especially, Rosomaski, if I have not shed your last drop of blood, as your wife is at present persuaded, yet I am preparing for you evils more painful than corporeal tortures, and even death itself. You shall endure the torments of the soul, and I will intoxicate myself with the most exquisite spectacle of your sufferings."

Lanfranco instantly sought the Jew Ishmael, who was enjoying, in imagination,
the

the happiness which the deluding smiles and condescension of Rhodiska made him hope for in reality. As he accosted Ishmael, Lanfranco composed his countenance under the mask of moderation, and said to him, with a mollified tone—

“ My dear friend Ishmael, pardon the fiery transports, which I could not, at first, master. I have too inconsiderately given way to the rash dictates of a blind passion ; I have bestowed on you unmerited reproaches, and I now intreat you to forget them ; you shall never find a stauncher friend than Lanfranco. I tremble whilst I think that we have been on the point of arming ourselves against each other. We are rivals ; we might even become enemies, if we did not take the precaution of removing from us the object of this fatal rivalry. Believe me, my dear Ishmael, a woman is not worthy of disturbing the mutual bonds which attach us to each other : I willingly make you the sacrifice of the desires with which Rhodiska has inspired

inspired me; consent to make the same sacrifice to me. We will send her to Cracow, with such precautions as will not let her entertain a doubt that she has performed the length of way requisite to bring her thither from my fictitious castle on the shores of the lake of Guarda. We shall thus escape suspicion, and she will carry away with her the germ of those discords which might spring up betwixt us, and plunge us into a common disaster; for do not dissemble that my fate and yours are linked together. If I have committed crimes, you have been the partaker of them; the sword of justice cannot strike me, without reaching you at the same instant. But, supposing that your life was not at stake, it is, at least, sure that you would ruin your fortune, since you would lose the support of my riches."

"Artful Lanfranco," replied Ishmael, "do not imagine that you will be able to impose upon me: you would have me believe that you are going to convey Rhodiska."

diska to the city of Cracow, and you would drag her, by stealth, into some retreat, which would be concealed from me, where you would outrage her before you set her at liberty. If I renounce the hope of satisfying my passion, I will be certain that you make an equal sacrifice, and that she reach Cracow unsullied. It is not against her that your resentment should be directed; it is only against him who has deprived you of her hand."

"Ishmael," rejoined Lanfranco, "do not fear that I entertain the least wish to deceive you; I will no longer take revenge upon Rhodiska in person: shall I not have sufficient vengeance, by depriving her of her husband and her daughter?"

"Well," continued Ishmael, "I accept your offer, but upon these conditions—Rhodiska shall be accompanied to Cracow by two women, and four trusty men, of whom, one of the former, and two of the latter, shall be chosen by me, and the remainder by yourself. By this method we shall

shall have an equilibrium of force and resistance, which will ensure the safety of this unhappy female."

"Agreed," replied Lanfranco; "but then I also have a condition."

"I have not finished mine yet," said Ishmael: "you must swear that no attempt shall be made against the life of Rhodiska's daughter."

Ishmael made this proposal to save Paulina, from an idea that his having it in his power at any future time to restore her to her mother, would prove an additional inducement to her to grant, and almost ensure success to his wishes.

"I agree to this latter condition also," replied Lanfranco, "to convince you that I am not inclined to reject the arrangement of which you are desirous, and that I earnestly wish to prevent a rupture between two friends, so necessary to each other; but you must also swear that you will never reveal to Rhodiska that her husband still exists, and that she has been the dupe of a stratagem."

"To

"To shew you that I am as much desirous of an accommodation as you can be," said Ishmael, "I will swear."

When this reciprocal convention had been formally ratified, Ishmael hastened to acquaint Rhodiska, that, at his earnest solicitation, or rather peremptory demand, Lanfranco had yielded to suffer her to depart from the subterraneans of his castle, on the shores of the lake of Guarda, and to send her to Cracow.

"Alas!" cried Rhodiska, "to what new horrors am I destined?—The barbarous Lanfranco can never be softened; the favours which he grants are always perfidious, and ever tend to prepare the way for new afflictions. I can perish here as well as elsewhere."

"Madam," replied Ishmael, "rely upon my word; you are at the end of your captivity, and Lanfranco is at last weary of being inhuman: but he exacts that you never disclose the secret of the place which you are about to quit."

"Can

"Can it be possible," rejoined Rhodiska, "that my cup of bitterness should be exhausted, and that Lanfranco should have the intention of restoring me to liberty?—But what is liberty to me, or even life, since I have seen my husband perish? and my daughter——"

"Not another word on that subject," said Ishmael, in an under tone of voice; "prudence demands your silence: be content to know that she is alive, and under my protection; and when I follow you to Cracow, as I shall certainly do, you may lay me under such a load of obligation, as will infallibly cause me to restore her in perfect safety to your arms."

Lanfranco, who was listening at the door, now put an end to this private conference, by causing it to be announced to Ishmael, that every thing was ready for Rhodiska's departure. Without any farther delay, this unfortunate woman was acquainted that she was going to leave the castle on the shores of the lake of Guarda. Some refreshments

refreshments are presented to her, and a bandage is placed over her eyes; she is then led to the berlin, which waited at a small distance, and placed in it. Two women and two men follow her into the carriage; a fifth does the office of a coachman, and the sixth takes the place of a footman behind it.

The berlin, after having crossed the subterranean, stopped at some distance from the machine which was to raise the platform. The two men who were in the berlin, alighted to assist in making preparations for the ascent. All being ready, the berlin was placed on the platform, and the tuns of water were again agitated by the paddles, to keep up Rhodiska's delusion of her having crossed a part of the lake of Guarda, when she descended into the subterraneans of the Carpathian mountains. The bacchanalian songs were kept up for the same purpose. As soon as the berlin had mounted to the top of the shaft, it quitted the platform, and moved on. The

coachman, who had received his instructions, instead of taking the road to Cracow, conducted the berlin into one of those immense forests, which then bristled the greatest part of Poland: that to which he drove the berlin, was about ten leagues in length, and extended from the Carpathian mountains to the town of Byecz. As soon as the coachman arrived at the other extremity of the forest, he turned about and drove back again; he stopped only such time as was strictly necessary to refresh the horses, or to get fresh ones, which were continually brought to him at a particular spot, which had been fixed upon for that purpose. These brigands had so well taken their dimensions, that they always knew at what part of the forest to stop to receive subsistence for themselves and their prisoner. After having traversed the forest six times in different directions, they made the circuit of it, and so continued this tortuous and serpentine march, without having ever left the forest; till having passed five days and

and nights in the journey, they had taken all the precautions necessary to persuade Rhodiska that she had made a voyage of two hundred leagues, which is nearly the distance from the lake of Guarda to Cracow.

The coachman then quitted the forest, and drove, by an unfrequented road, to the environs of a hamlet, which was at two leagues distance from Cracow. The carriage was then stopped, and one of the conductors of Rhodiska alighted, and made her also descend. Then he took her by the arms, and turning himself round rapidly, he made her describe a hundred circles in a minute or two. Rhodiska, stunned with giddiness, fell on the ground. The brigand then detached the bandage from her eyes, and got quickly into the berlin, which instantly drove off with extreme velocity. It had vanished before Rhodiska had well recovered her sight, of which she had been so long deprived.

Rhodiska, after having recovered herself from the swimming of her head, rose and

looked round her. It was then nearly dark, and she perceived some lights which glimmered from afar; she directed her languid steps towards the spot, and arrived at the hamlet. She knocked at the door of a cottage, which was immediately opened by an old peasant, who held a lamp in his hand; she related to him, in few words, that she had been set down in the midst of the high road from Italy, by a troop of banditti, who, after having seized her in the streets of Cracow, had carried her to a castle on the shores of the lake of Guarda. She intreated him to cause her to be immediately conducted to the walls of Cracow, which the banditti had informed her were only about two leagues distant. The old rustic offered to accompany her; and as she was very languid and faint, he prevailed upon her to accept of a mule, which was the only beast he possessed, to ride on.



CHAP. VIII.

AFTER a journey of about two hours, Rhodiska arrived at Cracow at about ten o'clock in the evening. It was then about the latter end of the second month of winter, when she arrived at the house of her friend Theresia: as soon as she rung the bell, and was admitted, she knew the servant; but she herself was so altered, that the domestic had some trouble to recognise her. She told the domestic to give the old man two ducats, which were the earnings of nearly a fortnight to him, and having thanked him for his humanity, she ran towards the room where Theresia

usually sat when there was no company.—The door was opened, and these two friends instantly recognised each other, and flew into a close embrace, without uttering a single word on either side for some time. At length, Theresia cried out—

“My tender friend! do I at length behold you again?—Whence come you?—Why are you alone?—Where is your dear Rosomaski?”

At this question, which tore open the wound of Rhodiska's heart, the sobs almost suffocated her.

“What means this mute language of despair?” said Theresia; “speak—leave me not in this dreadful uncertainty.”

During some minutes, Rhodiska tried in vain to articulate some sounds, but they produced only groans. Theresia, trembling and terrified, intreated her to explain herself.

“Alas!” sobbed out Rhodiska, “he has perished before my eyes, under the sabre of the satellites of my barbarous enemy.”

“Heavens!”

“Heavens!” replied Theresia, almost frozen with horror, “what do you tell me?—Rosomaski has perished!—How happened this dreadful event?”

Rhodiska, distracted by her grief, remained some time without answering her. At length, as if she had waked from a dream, she cried out—“My son! my Ladislaus! where is he?—Where is all that now remains to attach me to life?”

“Follow me,” replied Theresia, “and you will see, that in spite of your direful misfortunes, you still ought to be careful of your existence.”

Theresia conducted Rhodiska into the chamber where Ladislaus was sleeping in her own bed; he was in a profound repose, and yet the fresh carnation of his cheeks announced that he had not suffered in his health during the time which he had been separated from his mother.

Rhodiska, at the sight, gave a joyful exclamation, and her impatience would not suffer her to respect the sleep of her be-

loved child; she took him in her arms, and grasped him to her heart with so much energy, that Ladislaus, perceiving himself so suddenly disturbed, began to make some plaintive moans. It was with difficulty that Theresia could prevail upon Rhodiska to suffer him to recompose himself, and delay her maternal emotions till Ladislaus should be in a state of returning them by his juvenile caresses: she took him out of his mother's arms, replaced him, and having hushed him to his former state of tranquillity, led Rhodiska out of the room.

Theresia burned with impatience to know the circumstances which had passed since their last separation; and Rhodiska, who had recovered some little calm from the sight of her long-lost son, began her narration, which was lengthened out by long sighs. At the moment when she gave a description of the horrid spectacle which struck her eyes when she imagined the real Rosomaski had perished, Theresia felt her hair bristle on her head; but in an
instant

instant terror gave way to grief, and spent itself in tears. Rhodiska, oppressed by her own emotions, was obliged to make a long pause before she could relate the strange concurrence of circumstances by which she had been at last liberated from the subterraneans of the castle on the shores of the lake of Guarda.

After this recital was finished, Theresia endeavoured to console her friend, by telling her that she had recovered her son, and there were still hopes of her having her daughter restored to her. She then asked her, if she should not be delighted to hear some tidings of Ludowico?

"Where is that dear and invaluable friend of my lamented husband?" cried Rhodiska. "Ah! how cruelly has he been injured by our suspicions!—What have you heard of him?"

Theresia then gave her an account of what had befallen him on his return from Jaroslow, and of his liberation from the dungeon of the citadel of Cracow: she

concluded by informing her, that the instant she had shown him the letter which Rhodiska had sent her from Genoa, he had determined to fly to the succour of his friends, and had actually departed for Genoa on the following day ; since which time she had not heard from him. " What must have been his anxiety," added she, " to find on his arrival that you had again fallen into some dreadful snare of your enemy, and been conveyed no one knows whither !"

" And what must have been the agony of our other generous friend and benefactor, the worthy Giovanni, who expected, on the very night of our disappearance, to have been united to us in the closest bonds ? — Ah ! we have too long delayed to inform them of our destiny. Perhaps they are even now seeking us every where in the environs of Genoa ; let us hasten to clear up their suspense : but, my God ! what will be their sensations, when they shall read the fate of the hapless Rosomaski and Paulina ?"

Whilst

Whilst Rhodiska wrote to Giovanni, Theresia undertook to acquaint Ludowico with what had passed. On any other but so melancholy a subject, she would have been delighted with the opportunity of writing to him, and of conveying to him the sentiments of her own esteem, under the mask of expressing those of her friend Rhodiska for him. When they had communicated the contents of their letters to each other, they sealed them up; and Theresia instantly dispatched a messenger, who was ordered to spare no expence to procure himself the quickest mode of conveyance to Genoa.

The satisfaction of possessing her son had appeared, in the first moments of maternal sensibility, to suspend the heaviness which oppressed the heart of Rhodiska; but when the first transports of her joy were over, the sight of her child served only to awaken her pangs. Every time that she looked at him, she felt her eyes bedimmed with tears, and the most painful remem-

16

brances

friends, in such terms as discovered that these two worthy men had, in a short time, been no less attached to each other, than they had been to their mutual friends, the Rosomaskis.

At length, returning night brought round the hour of rest, and Ludowico retired to his apartment. As soon as he was alone, he abandoned himself anew to all the bitterness of his reflections. After having wept and groaned during several hours, at the supposed loss of his friend, the fatigue of so long a journey interrupted his grief, by burying him in a sound sleep. He rose with the sun; and then, for the first time, recollected the packet which Rosomaski had given him, when they last parted at Vistulof, and forbidden him to open, till after his death.

“ Oh, my beloved friend !” cried Ludowico, “ how willingly would I have saved thy life at the expence of my own ! Whilst I possessed thee, I thought that I fulfilled all the duties of friendship towards thee ;

now

now that I am deprived of thee, I will acquit myself of all that I owe to thy memory. The dreaded time of opening this packet, which I hoped never to see, is arrived: whatever obligations it may impose on me, it will be bliss to me to fulfil them." He opened the packet, and found that it contained a letter, of which this was the substance :—

" Oh, my dear Ludowico ! the most tender and most generous of friends ! receive the grateful acknowledgements which I owe you for the important services which you have rendered me. I perceive that the end of my career draws near ; if I should escape from the murdering steel of my implacable and invisible enemy, I can never survive the loss of my son, and the grief which consumes me. I exact that you give me a last proof of your inviolable friendship, when I shall have
ceased

ceased to breathe. I bequeath to you the most precious treasure which I possess on earth, and which still charms my existence ; I mean my Rhodiska, my well beloved, whom I must quit. Without parents, without friends, she has only me for a support ; I ought to take care of her destiny, and to provide against the most disastrous event. Can I do better than present you with a wife who has been the pleasure of my own existence ?—She will soon have no husband, and it is my sincere wish that she should find one in my friend Ludowico.—She was dearer to me than life ; I give her the strongest proof of my regard, by desiring to unite her to you—to make a choice for her which must be propitious to her happiness. The experience which I have had of you, assures me that she will find in you a consoler, and a firm support. I shall die contented, in the persuasion that I shall leave my Rhodiska under the protection of a brave, sensible, and virtuous man. Do not seek to become my avenger ;
leave

leave my enemy in peace, that he may not think of you : seek only to become my rival in the art of contributing to the felicity of Rhodiska. I desire, that when the knot which unites her to me shall have been broken, the new union shall take place within three months after the day of my dissolution ; my shade will then rest in peace. I do not fear that my Rhodiska or you will refuse to yield to my intentions ; I will not do either of you so much injustice, as to suppose you will deny my last wish, which I make, in the fullest conviction that it will be for the happiness of both.—
Best of friends, adieu !”

“ Here’s then, oh my dear Rosomaski !” exclaimed Ludowico, struck with surprise, “ what was the mysterious object of the solemn oath which you exacted from me, when you put me in possession of this writing. What a pledge is this you leave
me

me of your friendship!—By giving me a woman so accomplished, you give me happiness; but it will be embittered by the reflection that I enjoy it only because you have lost it. What you ask of me as a service, is, on your part, a benefit of inestimable value; but ought you to have marked me out as a husband for your dear Rhodiska?—Was this title wanting to render me the defender of your widowed wife?—She has loved you too well, not to wish to continue faithful to your memory. If, in obedience to your last will, she consent to marry me, what affection can I hope from her?—Will my caresses ever be efficacious enough to dry up her tears?—At the time when, full of veneration for her virtues, and respect for a treasure possessed by my friend, I forbade my heart to be sensible to her charms, could I have ever foreseen that the most fatal event would bring her to my arms!—But I must have done with reflections; I have sworn to do whatever you should impose on me: I feel that I shall

shall want resolution to propose the execution of it to Rhodiska ; undoubtedly she has received some signification of your last intentions, and will deliver her sentiments respecting the accomplishment of them."

Such were the reflections which pressed upon the imagination of Ludowico, at the perusal of this writing. Not knowing how to meet the eyes of Rhodiska till he should have determined how to proceed, he left the house privately, and went into one of the most solitary walks which he could find, to deliver himself up to uninterrupted meditation.

When the hour of breakfast was come, Ludowico was not to be found ; and after waiting some time, the two friends sat down to table with a melancholy air, as if they presaged that something new was about to trouble their repose. In the midst of breakfast, a servant delivered to Rhodiska a note and a parcel ; she opened the former with a trembling hand, but instantly

stantly dropped it, on beholding the signature of Lanfranco !

“Heavens !” cried Theresia, “what is the matter ?—Has any thing new happened to——”

She was about to add “Ludowico,”—at whose absence she was alarmed ; but she instantly checked the starting word. She saw that Rhodiska pointed to the note, as if she wished her to read it, and in eager anxiety she picked it up, and read what follows :—

“By my consenting to liberate you, I have shewn that my vengeance is no longer directed against you. I give you another proof of it, by my haste to transmit you, from my castle on the shores of the lake of Guarda, the last will of your deceased husband, which was found in his clothes, and which may be of service to

to you. You can fear no deception, as the hand-writing must be well known to you. No longer your enemy,

“LANFRANCO.”

Rhodiska summoned the servant again, to ask who brought the note, and was informed it was left by an unknown person, who would not wait for an answer. Rhodiska then looked on the superscription of the packet, and beheld, in the well-known hand-writing of Rosomaski, these words—“For my dearest Rhodiska; not to be opened till after my decease.”—Her eyes were instantly filled with tears, and it was some time before Theresia could prevail upon her to open the packet, and peruse the contents. When Rhodiska had proceeded so far as the passage where Rosomaski, in the most pathetic and pressing manner, conjured her to marry his tender friend Ludowico, she exclaimed—

“Dear

“Dear Rosomaski! what do you enjoin me?—to become the wife of another, after having experienced the happiness of being yours!—What a trial for your Rhodiska!—Can I love again, after having lost you?—I expected to live only to bewail you; my dearest hope was to remain faithful to your memory. The faithful turtle dove, deprived of its mate, never makes a new choice. Sad and painful as is the title of the widow of Rosomaski, yet it is much dearer to me than that of the wife of any other man. Why, by an ill-directed tenderness, have you wished to break my resolution; if I could give my heart to any other, Ludowico would be the man. I justly appreciate his merit, and know the value of his benefits; he has my friendship, but why must all my love cease to be for you?—You propose him to me to assure me a supporter; but what need have I of one, since I seek only to terminate my disastrous life? I should bless the cruelty of Lanfrance, if, by ending my
days

days also, he would break the barrier which retains me here on earth, exiled from you."

Rhodiska uttered this apostrophe, and might have made one considerably longer, without the least interruption from Theresia, who had no sooner learned that Rosomaski had bequeathed his nuptial couch to Ludowico, whom she loved in secret, than she felt as if a dagger had struck her to the heart. She was, at length, roused, by Rhodiska's asking her to give her the advice of a tender friend, in so delicate a conjuncture.

"My dear friend," replied Theresia, dissembling her trouble and displeasure, "after having lost a most beloved husband, it is undoubtedly painful to be under the obligation of giving him a successor, and of receiving the kisses of the second on the cheek moistened with the traces of the tears occasioned by the loss of the first; on the other hand, it might be painful to oppose the last intentions of a husband, who,

who, little flattered that his wife should remain faithful to his ashes, himself conjures her to form a new engagement, and throw herself into the arms of his friend. You know that I cannot preach up obedience to those last dictates, which dispose of our hands without consulting our inclinations, because I have resisted that of my mother; but there are cases of so delicate a nature, that even friendship would be justified in withholding advice. The situation in which you are placed, is one of that nature, and suffer me to leave you to your own impulse."

Rhodiska in vain pressed her to express her sentiments, but Theresia continued to excuse herself, and to give only unmeaning answers. At length she said to Rhodiska—"I am unable to give you any other advice than what you may gather from my own example, in a similar conjuncture; but let me ask of you, in my turn, whether, after what you have experienced of the artifices of Lánfranco, you are satisfied

5 that

that this is not another snare laid for you? —Are you certain that this will is not counterfeited?"

Rhodiska again looked at the hand-writing with the most minute attention, and then replied, that if it had not been for the doubt suggested to her by Theresia, she should never have entertained the least suspicion of its being a forgery, nor could she then believe it to be so.

"Then I have no more to say," rejoined Theresia; "and must intreat you not to press me any further on this subject."

Rhodiska was still looking on the will, as if to detect an imposition, when Ludowico entered the room. "Look at this paper," said Rhodiska, presenting it to him, "and tell us whether it be really the hand-writing of your lamented friend."

Whilst Ludowico was perusing the paper, Theresia regarded him with a look of the most wistful attention. After he had perused it, she saw him pause, and waited his breaking silence with the most painful anxiety.

"I can have no doubt that this writing is really Rosomaski's," said Ludowico, "because previously to my last separation from my friend at Vistulof, he delivered into my hands a sealed packet, the contents of which he made me take an oath to observe. I broke it open this morning, and found it to contain exactly the same wish and the same injunction on me, as that which is addressed to Rhodiska has laid upon her: here is the packet which he delivered to me."

He presented it to Rhodiska, who perused it with silent attention. "I can no longer entertain the least doubt of the last wishes of my husband," said Rhodiska; "they are expressed too clearly to be misinterpreted."

"And may I ask, Madam," said Ludowico, "whether you are disposed to comply with them?"

"He could not have made a choice more agreeable to me," replied Rhodiska, "if I had not proposed to remain ever faithful to his manes. You are my most esteemed friend;

friend; but, still full of the image of my dear Rosomaski, it would cost me too much to let you take the title of my lover. Do not press me to fulfil an engagement which appears to me to militate against my attachment to the memory of Rosomaski."

"It is for you, Madam," rejoined Ludowico, "to decide whether, on your part, you will shew a respect to the memory of your late husband. As for me, I have sworn to execute his intentions; I make it, therefore, a duty to claim an honour, which I regard as the most precious pledge of his friendship. I am very far from pressing upon my advantages; but I persuade myself, that in fixing upon me to succeed him with his adored wife, our dear Rosomaski has been guided as much by a lively solicitude for your welfare, as by a desire to prove his regard for me. Foreseeing that you might one day be left alone, and without a support, he has proposed to himself to give you a defender. I dare

say, without too much presumption, that my unbounded devotion to whatever was dear to him, does not render me unworthy of so flattering a distinction. I will not exaggerate the dangers which still threaten you: I should blush to make use of such means to incline you to favour my pretensions; but I cannot refrain from confiding to you my apprehensions. Your deliverance, you have informed me, has been the work of the moderation of an accomplice of Lanfranco: do not think that these monsters ever pardon; their gentlest treatment are often only preludes to new plans of vengeance. There still remains to you a son, a living image of your dear Rosomaski; you ought to watch over his preservation, and to preserve yourself for him. Suffer me, then, to remain with you, to defend you, and love you—to live and die for you. Pronounce my destiny, and say whether you will fulfil the last injunctions of your husband, and become my wife?"

Rhodiska,

Rhodiska, after a short silence, had no sooner pronounced the decisive word—"Yes,"—than Theresia instantly hurried out of the room, and retired to her chamber, to give vent to her grief in unrestrained agony.

CHAP. IX.

RHODISKA, who had observed some alteration in Theresia's countenance, desired Ludowico to go and enquire whether she was unwell, whilst she went to her own apartment to dress herself. Ludowico followed Theresia to her apartment; but as he approached the door, he heard her talking; and stopped, thinking she had

some person with her. What was his astonishment, when he heard her pronounce these words—

“Oh Ludowico ! it is you, then, whom love has chosen to punish me for having defied his power : I thought what I felt was only gratitude, but it was a tenderer passion. How much am I to be pitied !—I love you more than myself, and yet I am on the point of losing you for ever : the indissoluble ties, which you are shortly about to form, leave me no hope of ever calling you mine. It is my dearest friend who, without knowing it, has plunged the dagger into my heart. I must smother the flame which consumes me. What a torment !—The most tender inclination draws me towards you, oh Ludowico ! and yet I am reduced to the necessity of dissembling it. I should die with shame, if you should discover the passion with which you inspire me, and which you can never return : I should tremble to disturb the generous soul of my friend, and to expose her to
severe

severe pangs, by discovering to her what I suffer at the approach of her fatal marriage. But how shall I be able to endure the anguish which oppresses me !—How powerful must then be this victorious ascendancy, which, in spite of me, subdues my haughtiness, triumphs over my reason, and intoxicates my heart !—What course ought I to pursue ?—Yes, I will persist in my design ; I will endeavour to conceal my feelings : but will they not be betrayed by my looks, my words, and perhaps even by my silence ?—What tumultuous struggles agitate my irresolute thoughts !—In vain do I strive to form plans for my conduct. Oh, Ludowico ! I am only certain that I love you, and that I know not how long I shall command sufficient restraint over myself, to hide from you that you alone occupy all my thoughts.”

By degrees, the sounds of her voice became more confused, until they were too low and interrupted, to make out any distinct words. Ludowico heard only some

painful exclamations, mingled with deep sighs. He had always thought that Theresia was inaccessible to the impressions of love, and his surprise was extreme, when he had obtained an unquestionable proof that she possessed an exquisite sensibility, and that he himself was the cause of this astonishing metamorphosis. Though it must be flattering to find one's self beloved, yet this generous man could not help feeling pain, at thinking that he had inspired a passion which it was become impossible for him to return. He would have wished at that instant to have been possessed of a second heart, which he would have immediately bestowed upon Theresia; but, unable to divide his homage, he was obliged to reserve it entire for Rhodiska, whose virtues and charms deserved an exclusive tenderness. He had nothing left to bestow on Theresia but an affectionate regard, a tribute of admiration, and sentiments of gratitude.

As he walked softly from the door, he resolved

resolved never to disclose to Rhodiska what he had so accidentally discovered, lest she might wish to delay a marriage so destructive to the repose of her friend.

In his way he met with Rhodiska, who was that instant about to seek Theresia, and to clear up her concern for her health. She immediately asked Ludowico if he had heard whether her friend was unwell?—Ludowico only answered, that she had shut herself up, and that he did not think proper to disturb her. Rhodiska then sought Theresia in her chamber; but her enquiries produced only evasive answers, as Theresia had armed herself with dissimulation on the true state of her ailment.

In the mean time, the barbarous Lanfranco was consoling himself for the departure of Rhodiska, with the idea that by escaping from his hands, she would not free herself from his vengeance. His ferocious heart had, beside, a two-fold satisfaction in holding the two remaining objects of his implacable hatred in his hands. He went

to find Paulina; whom he had shut up in a little subterranean apartment, whose furniture consisted of a wretched bed, a stool and table: at the moment he appeared before her, she was reading a religious book, which, by some odd caprice, he had caused to be placed on the table. This amiable young lady, after having passed several days in bewailing the fate of her parents, whom she supposed to have perished, had found, in her religious principles, a source of consolation unknown to the wicked.—At sight of Lanfranco she grew paler, and trembled with horror. “You see, Madam,” said Lanfranco, “to what misfortunes the blind preference which your mother gave to another man, and the injuries with which your father has loaded me, have subjected them and you.”

“Your crimes,” replied Paulina, “have sufficiently justified my mother’s preference, and my father is incapable of doing injuries to any one.”

“Be that as it may,” rejoined Lanfranco,
“they

"they are now suffering a thousand torments in their separation from each other."

"Ah! I breathe again," cried Paulina; "they still exist."

"Yes, Madam, they exist," replied Lanfranco; "I torment them, but I do not wish for their death. My resentment ought to be less violent against you than them. I may be even induced to give you your liberty, at the request of a friend of your's, who is arrived here from Genoa. I am going to send him to you."

As he left the room, Paulina exclaimed—

"Alas! can it be so?—Is the generous, the worthy Giovanni, fallen into the hands of this wicked man, and implicated in our misfortunes?—I shall then be wretched indeed!"—She had scarcely finished these words before she beheld the vile Gramani.

"Are you the friend from Genoa?" said Paulina; "then, thank Heaven! my fears were vain!"

"They were, indeed," replied Gramani, "for I have ensured your safety. I have

no other business here than to give you the most undoubted proofs of my sincere attachment to you. It could not have escaped your observation at Genoa, that I loved, I adored you; but I was then bound to another: I was no sooner freed from my chains, than I longed to wear your's, and to rescue you from the tyranny which, by claiming your gratitude, Giovanni exercised over you. It was barbarous to seclude you from the world, who were formed to be seen and admired. I now offer you my heart, with all the pleasures which the world can afford."

"I prefer this, and even a worse, abode without you," said Paulina.

"You do not know half the torments which the cruel Lanfranco is yet preparing for you," said Gramani, "and which your consent to give me your hand can alone rescue you from. He will not dare to persecute one who shall make me her protector."

"He cannot add to my sufferings,"
replied

replied Paulina, "now that he has subjected me to your insults; but I despise both you and them."

"I shall not rest till I have procured you your liberty, however," said Gramani: "I take my leave for the present; and, perhaps, at our next interview, you will have altered your mind."

Paulina cast her eye on her book; and as Gramani observed that she took no further notice of him, he retired, leaving her in the utmost consternation at knowing that her parents and herself had another no less cruel and artful enemy than Lanfranco to deal with. At night she would not suffer herself to take any repose, but continued reading and weeping.

The next day the woman who attended her brought the breakfast as usual: after she had barely satisfied the cravings of nature, she saw the woman enter with a miner's frock, which, she told her, she was to put on, to pass undiscovered through the caverns, previously to her being liberated.

"Liberated

"*Liberated*, indeed!" replied the af-frighted Paulina, who expected no other deliverance than death.

As she offered no resistance, the woman threw the frock over her head, and fastened it round the waist. Lanfranco then entered the room, and declared that he was going to perform the promise which he had made her on the preceding day, of setting her at liberty, at the request of her friend from Genoa; but he must forewarn her, that till he had carried her to a distance from his castle, he could not dispense with blind-folding her. Paulina's eyes were covered, without her making the least complaint or resistance, either from knowing their inefficacy, or from the stupefaction which her terror occasioned. She was then conducted to a carriage, and placed in it; Lanfranco took his seat beside her. By the light of the torches, which several men on horseback carried, they pursued their route through the subterranean passages which lead from the Carpathian caverns to the mines of Wielitska. During the three hours;

hours which they employed in traversing the five leagues which formed the length of this passage Paulina answered not a syllable to all the consolatory speeches which Lanfranco made to her, on the subject of her being about to regain her liberty.

They passed through the mines of Wielitska, which were then entirely deserted, because that day was a festival for all the workmen, who, except Lanfranco's accomplices, had quitted the mines, to go into the adjoining villages, and give themselves up to their rude sports and pastimes.

As soon as the carriage arrived on the surface of the earth, the coachman, according to his orders, drove it into a part of the forest, situated at no great distance from another entrance into the mine.— When it arrived at a certain spot, the coachman stopped it, and Lanfranco alighted, and assisted Paulina to do the same: he loosened the bandage from her eyes, and said to her—

“You

"You are at liberty, Madam; direct your steps that way, and you will soon arrive at a place where you will find a carriage to convey you to Cracow: but I forbid you, at the peril of your life, to reveal to any person that you have been confined in the subterraneans of my castle on the shores of the lake of Guarda."

Paulina eagerly embraced the opportunity of quitting the presence of her persecutor; she walked away hastily, overjoyed, notwithstanding her supposition that she was at so great a distance from her friends, at once more beholding the light of day, and the variegated scenes of vegetative nature. Already hope is renewed in her heart, and she begins to think of the means which she shall employ to return to Genoa, which was nearer than Cracow, and to procure the deliverance of her parents. She walked beyond her feeble strength, as she amused herself with these pleasing schemes, and beheld with admiration the majestic setting of the sun—a sight which

which she had been so long deprived of, and despaired of ever beholding again.— She continued walking, without discovering any termination of the surrounding forest, till fatigue compelled her to rest herself at the foot of a tree. Either want of sleep during the preceding night, or the glaring light of day, to which her eyes had been so long unused, overcame her, and, in spite of all her endeavours, she fell into a slumber, whence she was suddenly roused by perceiving herself raised up from the ground. She opened her eyes, and beheld a black spectre, which carried her away, grinding his teeth, and grinning most horribly; Paulina uttered a doleful cry, and became insensible. When she came to herself, she perceived that she was held on the knees of the spectre, who, seated on a plank, and suspended in the air, slid along a great cable, whose extremity was lost in the bottom of the abyss. This descent was lighted only by a lanthorn, whose feeble light only made the darkness more frightful,

ful, by rendering it visible, and discovering the depth of the gulph. It would be impossible to describe the terrors of Paulina, who experienced such a convulsion, that she would have inevitably fallen, if she had not been retained by the strong arm of the spectre.

At the end of half an hour, she perceived the bottom of the abyss ; the spectre quits his vehicle, and carries her to a vast subterranean hall, where new objects of terror awaited her. Every thing appeared which might impress the mind with the idea of its being the dark abode of demons : Paulina beheld a sort of colossal figure, covered with black skins, and seated on a coffin.—His eyes were of the colour of fire ; his head bristled with horns ; his hand was armed with an iron fork, whose triple prongs sparkled. On each side stood two other figures, whose appearance was no less terrifying, and who seemed to attend his orders.

As soon as Paulina appeared, one of
them

them presented her with a paper, on which were inscribed, in large characters, these words:—"Give an account of your conduct to the grand chief of the infernal regions."—Paulina, whose strength of mind was superior to this deception, threw the paper on the ground; and said not a word. The chief of the demons wrinkled his brow, gnashed his teeth, and lashed the air with his trident; this was a signal to the two ministers, who instantly suspended themselves by the rope of an enormous bell, and rang it violently; all the echoes of the caverns repeated the thundering sounds.

Shortly, a troop of demons, whose figures were various, but all of a nature to inspire horror, appeared, making such frightful hissings, that one would have imagined himself transported into one of those islands which are inhabited only by legions of snakes. They surrounded Paulina, and carried her away, hissing furiously all the way, into another hall still more frightful.

She

She perceived a fiery furnace, in the midst of which was an enormous boiler, which seemed to resound with the cries of the victims which it contained, as if they were suffering all the pangs of being plunged into a bath of boiling water. The demons danced round the furnace, and shouted as they cast fresh fuel on the fire.

Paulina was very little distracted by all these demoniac exhibitions, as she was inwardly preparing herself to meet that termination of her sufferings which she expected. She was, however, removed from this hall, and conducted into a sort of dark valley, where her ears were struck with a noise resembling that which is heard in those vast abysses contained in the bowels of the Alps, which are the sources of so many famous rivers. She sees the torrents falling over the rugged summit of a rock, from which a thousand congelations hung in stalactites. These waters sunk at the foot of a rock, and lost themselves with a hoarse bellowing. The air around was loaded with a thick mist.

The

The hissing demons then forced Paulina to the bottom of a deep valley, where she saw a large reservoir, whose waters were slightly agitated; they placed her in a small boat, which floated near the edge, and pushing it off to a distance, they pulled it round the reservoir by means of a chain, one end of which was fixed to it, and the other extremity they held in their hands. As soon as Paulina saw herself alone in the boat, she imagined that they designed to sink it with her; but in a few minutes, her fears changed their object. All the demons, shouting with the utmost fury, approached their torches to the surface of the water, which was instantly covered with a bluish flame, like that which proceeds from spirituous liquors, and exhaled a strong odour of naphtha and bitumen. The quivering flame approached the boat, and Paulina, either yielding at length to so many terrors, or overcome with the smell, fell extended on the bottom of the boat. The chief of the pretended demons, who,

as

as will be easily guessed, was no other than Lanfranco himself, instantly ordered that she should be brought to land, and conveyed to her chamber at the bottom of the Carpathian caverns. These orders were immediately executed : Paulina was conveyed to a carriage, which was in waiting, and carried to her chamber, where she was placed on the bed, still insensible.

As the pretended demons were no other than Lanfranco and his accomplices, so the phenomena which had been made use of to terrify the unhappy Paulina, all existed in the mines of Wielitska. The spectre who seized her in the forest, was only one of the workmen, who had been selected for his amazing strength : the grand judge was one of the tallest workmen ; and Lanfranco and Gramani were his two ministers. The bell was that which summoned the labourers to their work after the hours of rest were expired ; the large cauldron, which appeared to contain wretches punished by fire, was the boiler in which all the food

of

of the two thousand men, generally employed in the mines, was prepared; the groans were sent forth by some persons placed on purpose behind it. The reservoir, which was meant to design a river of fire rolling through a valley of tears, was only a wonderful spring, which nature has placed in these caverns, and whose surface, constantly covered with naphtha, kindles at the contact of a lighted torch. These fiery vapours disappear presently, when the water is beaten with long bundles of flexible rods.*

* See Coxe's travels in Poland, and other writers on the subject of these phenomena of natural history.

CHAP. X.



AS soon as Paulina was put into the carriage, the flames were extinguished in that manner, and Lanfranco and his accomplices hastened to put every object in its usual state, and to clear away all the machinery employed to persuade Paulina that she was in the infernal regions, or rather that she had dreamed so. As all the workmen of the mine were to return to their labour on the next day, it was necessary to let nothing appear which might awaken the suspicions of those who were not initiated into the mysteries of Lanfranco.

Paulina never awoke till the next morning, when, after breakfast, she saw the
detested

detested Lanfranco and Gramani enter the room. "I am afraid," said the former, "that your rest last night must have been disturbed by some horrible vision, as the woman who attends you informs me that you uttered the most piercing groans."

"I have seen nothing worse than you, and your companion who accompanies you," replied Paulina; "you are more hideous to me than any other appearance whatever: but you are deceived, if you imagine that I believe there is any thing supernatural in those horrid sights which you presented to me last night. You may terrify me, but it is out of your power to pervert my senses."

"Be it so," rejoined Lanfranco; "I will no longer seek to deceive you. Know, then, that you are not in the subterraneans of my castle, on the shores of the lake of Guarda, but in the caverns of the Carpathian mountains, which communicate with the mines of Wielitska, in the neighbourhood of Cracow. I reveal this to you,

because I have nothing to fear from the discovery. The spectre who carried you away, and all the demons you beheld last evening, were only my instruments of vengeance; the phenomena which you witnessed are only the natural curiosities of this place. I am now going to convince you of it."—So saying, he ordered her attendant to clothe her once more in the miner's frock, to escape observation, and made her go with himself and Gramani.

They conducted her first to the machine which raised and lowered the platform, of which they described to her all the uses.—Paulina groaned at so much wickedness, but she uttered not a syllable. They then made her traverse those prodigious cavities, the surprising results of an excavation continued during several ages. She could not behold, without extreme astonishment, those vast abodes, which extended several leagues. After having wandered nearly two hours in the Carpathian mountains, they came to the passage which formed the communication

communication with the mines of Wielitska. The length of this dark passage filled Paulina with terror. At length they arrived at the mines of Wielitska, that wonderful laboratory of nature ; where, at each step, Paulina beheld new objects of surprise.— They made her observe the labourers, whose number and activity recalled to the spectator the laborious toils of a swarm of bees, driving from all quarters, to fill their winter's granary. Some, armed with wedges, hammers, and axes, separated from the mass enormous blocks of salt, which fell with a terrible crash, like those immense fragments which are described by travellers, as detaching themselves from the Alps and Cordilleras, with a noise like thunder ; others divided those solid blocks into fragments easy to be transported : some drove the waggons, drawn by several horses or wooden cylinders, on which were placed vessels filled with this crystal, reduced to small pieces, or transparent prisms, of an immense size ; others, as those excavations were

forming, supported the cumbrous roof with pillars of enormous piles of wood, fastened by iron clamps. Others again superintended these labours, as they moved about from place to place, to deliver the orders of the chief overseers, and to see that all worked with industry. They next visited the stables, which were the *depôt* of the magazines of forage, the waggons employed for the service of the mines, and nearly one hundred horses. They looked into the huts of the workmen, which were caverns of about eight feet square, furnished with some rude articles, and secured by doors.

As they went along, Paulina beheld the different objects, which had been made use of to terrify her on the preceding evening, the clock, the boiler, the torrents of water, and the reservoir. They next entered the cabinet of the Jew Ishmael, who was absent; it was dug out of the mass of salt, and was a kind of subterranean palace, but far exceeding them in the wonderful

derful decorations which it contained. It was lighted by lustres and chandeliers of transparent salt, which, by the fire of the lamps, sparkled like rock crystal. There the mineral kingdom displayed all its prodigies; the blocks of salt assumed a thousand different shapes, in columns, vases, arm-chairs, desks, tables, &c., polished with the nicest art. Ishmael's cabinet abounded in mineral riches; it contained the rarest and most curious articles which could be discovered, in ransacking the bowels of the earth. There were to be seen all the varieties of metals, minerals, and fossils, which the earth forms in its dark laboratories; besides surprising petrifications of trees, fruits, animals, and even human skeletons, entirely changed into stone, as if they had been transformed by Medusa's shield.

Paulina's conductors next led her to the chapel of this subterranean city, where every object would have excited her admiration, and given her sensations of pleasure.

if she had not entertained continual apprehensions of some sinister designs. The tapers with which it was purposely decorated and illumined, cast such a dazzling splendor on all the objects of carved salt, reflected and multiplied, that the eye might have been deceived into a belief of a temple lined with diamonds and precious stones. Filled with religious admiration, Paulina ejaculated a short, but fervent, prayer, for the preservation of her parents.

"Here," cried Lanfranco, "you may end your sufferings, if you please, and secure to yourself ease and plenty. After having revealed to you all my secrets, you may rest assured that it is not my intention to let you ever quit these abodes. By permitting you to return to Cracow, I should not only expose myself to accusations, so much the more dangerous as you know my retreat, and the engine of all my intrigues, but I should, moreover, deprive myself of a vengeance which I wish to prolong. You have witnessed all the
extent

extent of my domains; you know all the effects of my power; my friend, Gramani, is next to myself, and subject to no other person, in his controul over my dependants. Here, in this consecrated place, pledge your faith to him, and you will equal him in his command, and have nothing more to dread from my vengeance."

"I need have nothing more to dread," replied Paulina, "since death, in its most horrible shape, would not be half so terrific to me as the degradation of giving my hand to one whom I despise and detest."

"Then hear the alternative," cried Lanfranco, with a face glowing with rage: "sunk to the lowest degree of abject slavery, you shall groan in vain, for having despised my indulgence. Mixed with the wretches, who, in these dark caverns, pass their lives in the vile employment of mending the clothes of the workmen of the mines, you shall deplore the foolish blindness which dictates to you to contemn the intercession of my friend, and the

pardon which he has procured to be offered to you, and to draw on yourself the irreconcilable hate of an enemy who never pardons, unless it be the ashes of his victims."

"Alas, then, barbarian!" cried Paulina, in the bitterness of her indignation and grief, "I can no longer doubt it; my unhappy parents have fallen under your blows. It was only to deceive me that you declared to me that they still existed; those protestations were false. Your sneering smile, and ferocious look, assure me that they are no more, and that your heart is delighted with long draughts of a sanguinary vengeance; finish your crimes, by sacrificing their daughter; strike—I wished only to live for them; now that they are gone, I desire nothing more than to follow them."

"No," replied Lanfranco, "I have told you that I do not wish for the death of my victims; they would be then beyond my reach, and I should lose all the pleasures of vengeance. I prolong the lives of my enemies,

enemies, only to prolong their torments. I have vowed an implacable and eternal vengeance against those who gave you birth; that is enough to make me persecute all who are dear to them: but as you, yourself, have never given me any offence, I still wish to have an opportunity of excepting you from their just punishment.-- You are acquainted with the only means, and if you persist in your refusal——”

“As I certainly shall to the end of my life,” said Paulina, interrupting him.

“Then what you have already suffered,” resumed Lanfranco, “shall be nothing compared with what will be to come.”

“I am perfectly resigned,” said Paulina; “I will suffer patiently all that your cruel and unjust vengeance can heap upon me; but I will never abase myself to procure any enjoyment which it may be in your power to offer me.”

“Rash, inconsiderate woman!” cried Gramani, “I tremble for you. Will you render all my efforts to save you fruitless?”

"I have already told you," replied Paulina, "that death is preferable, in my sight, to life procured through your intercession."

"No more then," cried Lanfranco; "return with us to your prison, and expect the effects of my resentment, now kindled more fiercely than ever."

So saying, he seized Paulina by the arm, and pulled her out of the chapel. They again traversed the mines of Wielitska, the subterranean passage, and the caverns of the Carpathian mountains, until they arrived at Paulina's cell.

"Once more, and for the last time," cried Lanfranco, "I offer you the choice of marriage with Gramani, or my implacable and eternal vengeance."

"The latter, undoubtedly," replied Paulina, with a firm look and voice.

"Be it so," said Lanfranco, lifting up his voice. This was the signal for the entrance of three women, in one of whom, Paulina recognised, with increased horror, the treacherous Dorothea, who came to execute the cruel designs of Lanfranco.

"Here,"

"Here," cried Lanfranco, pointing to Dorothea, "is one whom you formerly commanded, and who was obliged to obey you; she shall now be your imperious task-mistress, and you shall obey her. I shall delight in humiliating that imperious family who once despised me. Your future mistress, Dorothea, is now the directress of the females employed in doing the needle-work of the mine; those other two are the principal workwomen. To them I confide the office of seeing that you are industrious in performing the meanest employments which they can find for you. Take her away," added he, addressing himself to Dorothea and the other two women, "and observe what I have commanded you."

These three women, faithful to the instructions which had been concerted between Lanfranco and Gramani, hurried Paulina into an adjoining store-room, where they clothed her in the dress usually worn in their wretched employment, and then hastened to shut her up in the work-

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room,

room, and to load her with every kind of indignity which their ingenuity could devise

Lanfranco was impatient to feast his eyes with the spectacle of the convulsions of Rosomaski. Like that hideous insect, the spider, the industrious weaver of snares, and mortal enemy of the winged insects, which, after having devoured one victim, entangled in one part of its trembling net, runs to glut its fury on another, suspended to another thread, and struggling in vain to disengage itself from the silken web, which only fetters it the more strongly—so did Lanfranco hasten from one vengeance to another.

Previously to entering the chamber in which Rosomaski languished, he caused him to be heavily ironed, that he might be the more certain of approaching him with impunity. From that frightful day on which Rosomaski had been dragged before Rhodiska to play a part in that heart-rending scene, he had always remained with his
hands

hands and legs unfettered. He was seized with a deadly astonishment, when he was again forced to receive new shackles; he did not know what conjectures he was to draw from such violence; but his anguish had been so excessive for a long time, that it could scarcely receive additional weight. Whilst he suffered in the presence of Rhodiska, he had been less wretched; but the instant he was separated from her, his heart was oppressed with a heavier load. Less tormented with his own troubles than with those to which he imagined that she was exposed, he had never ceased from entertaining the most gloomy imaginations.— Sometimes he beheld her, constrained by force, yielding to her ferocious oppressor an unworthy victory; at others, he painted her resolved to remain faithful, in spite of the most horrid threats, and preferring death to shame. Those cloudy ideas obscured his imagination, when he heard the door of his prison resound on its hinges. Lanfranco advanced towards him, and said

to

to him, with a look which betrayed his cruel transports—

“Audacious Rosomaski!—you undoubtedly ought, by this time, to repent of your insolent arrogance, and of the fatal successes which you formerly obtained over me. Tired of being a lover repulsed with contempt, I have become a formidable enemy; I wished to be beloved, but I am certain of being dreaded. Too long suffering under contempt, I have known how to revenge myself.”

“Barbarous Lanfranco!” replied Rosomaski, “your heart is nourished only with gall. Have you not sufficiently loaded me with evils?—Do you wish to make me expire by the slow and convulsive death which follows despair?”

“Let them tax me with ferocity,” said Lanfranco; “what care I, so as I can revenge myself?—I smile at the horrors which I inspire: my heart, shut against the finer feelings, knows no other enjoyment than that of rage. A common vengeance
does

does not suffice my resentment ; it must have one prolonged, and combined with cold blood, which will procure me pleasures of some duration. Death appears to me a punishment too mild for my enemies ; I am better satisfied if they linger a long time in the agonies of a miserable existence."

" Monster !" cried Rosomaski, " what a horrid portrait have you drawn of yourself ! — Compared with you, tigers have a degree of gentleness, since they tear their prey only to devour it, and not to prolong its sufferings."

" Whatever injurious names," said Lanfranco, " you may lavish upon me, I shall not the less adhere to those principles which you detest. The inexpressible joy of increasing your distress, is what brings me now before you. I have before unveiled to you all the extent of your misfortunes, of those of your family, and the profound depth of my terrible combinations."

" Alas !"

“Alas!” cried Rosomaski, interrupting him, “do you come to announce to me the death of my Rhodiska, or her dishonour and mine?”

“No; be easy as to her fate; but it is not yet time to speak of her. I must first shock you with the picture of the most monstrous ingratitude.”

At these words, the treacherous Zokalef and Dorothea appeared on the threshold of the door, which had remained half open; they approached with an easy step and smiling air.

“Behold,” cried Lanfranco, “these domestics, whom, during so many years, yourself and your wife have loaded with so many benefits; they have been my most devoted agents. You have been already acquainted with the services which they rendered me previously to their quitting Vistulof; but they have performed divers others since that time. Zokalef, in particular, is the person who executes the office of paying all the expences necessary to my enterprizes

enterprizes to overwhelm you; he has served me with as much zeal as intelligence. Dorothea, by means of the letter which she transmitted to you at Génoa, has not only caused you the most excruciating torments, on the supposed infidelity of your friend Ludowico, but by means of another letter, written to Colonel Darnim, wherein she pointed out that friend as the sole obstacle to his ardent wishes of espousing his son to Theresia, she caused him to arrest Ludowico on his return from Jaroslow, and throw him into one of the dungeons of the citadel of Crácow."

"Monster!" exclaimed Rosomaski, "my beloved friend then languishes——"

"No," interrupted Lanfranco, "he has been released by the death of Colonel Darnim; but it is to give you such agonizing pangs, that you would rather have wished him in his grave, as I shall make you feel by-and-by. But to continue:—These faithful servants have merited a splendid recompence, and I have it in store for them.

them. In my eyes, they could not deserve it better than by assisting me to tyrannize over my enemy: hence, my faithful servants, and send hither him who has the greatest claim to my confidence."

At these words, Dorothea and Zokalef left the room, whilst the indignant Rosomaski pursued them with a thousand execrations. Presently afterwards, Lanfranco saw the person whom he had sent for, arrive and stand at the exterior of the door. Rosomaski directed his eyes thither, and beheld, as he uttered a deep groan, the infamous Gramani.

"Rosomaski," said Lanfranco, "you see one of the principal artisans of your misfortunes, whom I had the happiness to fall in with, and to engage, during my residence at Venice. Born with a natural sagacity, and extraordinary talents, he is fit for any thing, and succeeds in all that he undertakes. He has instructed himself, without the aid of masters, in engraving and sculpture; and he has obtained a thorough

rough knowledge of the mechanics. His talents have acquired so much the greater perfection, because they have been employed to no other end than mischief; he hears me, and he will agree that I do not flatter either his talents or his designs. I owe to his plans almost all the contrivances I have put into execution against you; it was he who headed the party which carried you from Cracow to Genoa, and he has remained there till lately, to give me notice of all your actions, and to continue my vengeance towards you. But his last contrivance has so far exceeded all the rest, that I cannot sufficiently recompense him any other way than by bestowing on him the hand of your daughter, whose life I have spared for that purpose. You will, at least, owe me some gratitude for giving you such a son-in-law; for, in addition to his other talents, Gramani has made money formerly."

As Lanfranco uttered these last words, he approached Gramani, who was insensible

ble to shame, lowered the collar of his shirt, (which he might easily do, because Gramani was designedly without waistcoat or coat) and uncovered the shoulder of this malefactor. Rosomaski beheld with horror the impression of a hot iron. Rosomaski, who had been made acquainted with Gramani's keenness through Sardine's confession, but had not had time to learn from Giovanni the history of his scandalous life, was thunderstruck at beholding the tarnished body of a man with whom he had once lived on terms of strict intimacy.

"But, my dear Gramani," continued Lanfranco, "we have said enough in praise of your talents; it is now time to shew their *chef d'œuvre*."

Gramani, at these words, hastened off from the door; and Rosomaski asked Lanfranco either to ease his distracted heart, or break it at once, by acquainting him with the fate of Rhodiska.

"You shall know it presently," replied Lanfranco, who at that moment saw Gramani

mani return towards the door, laden with the work of which he had demanded the sight.

"Heavens! what do I see?" cried Rosomaski, when Lanfranco uncovered the model of a human figure, as large as life. "Here are my features, my hair, my figure, shape, and dress!"

"It is a second yourself," replied Gramani; "and, without vanity, I can assure you that it is impossible to make a better copy of nature, and to model in wax with more precision. There is a resemblance, particularly in the form of the eyes, mouth, and other features of the face; it required all my skill to give the physiognomy that expression of grief."

"What could have been the design of this work?" demanded Rosomaski; "a masterpiece of art, if it be ordered by Lanfranco, can only be intended to produce a crime."

"This statue," replied Lanfranco, with a bitter smile, "was an offering reserved
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for thy tender Rhodiska, to console her for the chagrin of being separated from her dear husband."

"Could you," said Rosomaski, "make a pastime of insulting misfortune so basely?—Though I should sink under it, tell me the truth; what vile combination has this work served?—Why did you cause me to be stripped of my clothes, the instant after I had left the hall hung with black, where I last beheld my desponding Rhodiska?"

"Well," replied Lanfranco, passing from irony to fury, "since you wish for an explanation, prepare yourself to hear recitals which will draw from you tears of blood.—I drew Rhodiska into these subterraneans to submit her to my desires; but to render her defeat more humiliating to herself, and more delicious to me, I wished to reduce her to yield her consent. No menace could intimidate that haughty beauty; I felt, at times, that, in spite of myself, so much virtue inspired me with respect; yet

I did not delay to throw off this imperious ascendancy. So obstinate a resistance served only to render my attacks more incessant; Rhodiska still continued inflexible, and I caused her to be dragged to the place whither you were brought into her presence. Your eyes were covered, so that you could not behold the funeral apparatus; but, from the lamentable cries of Rhodiska, you must have judged that she was either suffering some cruel torture, or that she was threatened with seeing you put to death in her presence. The instant you were sent out of her sight, your guards stripped you of your clothes, in order to cover your representative, before disfigured with blood; the head of which, whilst Rhodiska, absorbed in her grief, held her face reclined on her hands, fell under the stroke of a scymitar. When she raised her head, she saw, with horror, this image of your death, which it was easy to impose upon her as real, so artfully had this delusion been contrived, and she herself been so predisposed

predisposed to expect your catastrophe, by the previous scene which had been played off."

"Avenging Heaven!" cried Rosomaski, interrupting him, whilst his pallid cheeks and rolling eyes announced the last degree of fury and despair, "why dost thou not open under the feet of this monster the gulph of hell?—why does not the fire of thy wrath consume his impious head?—or, to prolong his tortures, why dost thou not attach the immortal vulture of devouring remorse to his execrable heart?—that frightful cave, whence venom springs, and where crimes are hatched!—Why am I laden with chains?—Oh, unhappy and angelic Rhodiska!—I would revenge thee —"

"I was sorry," continued Lanfranco, coolly, "that I had made use of so terrible a stratagem, when I saw Rhodiska remain, during the succeeding six hours, entirely deprived of sense. Urged, either by a remnant of compassion, or some other sentiment

sentimentless generous, I caused every possible care to be taken of her, which, however, did not hinder her from vibrating, during eight days, between life and death. When she was at the point of death, I succoured her; but, by a strange contrariety, which my cruel and fiery passions can alone explain, the return of her health restored to me all my fury and animosity. I resolved to take by force, what I should have preferred to owe to, at least, the appearance of consent. I was preparing to consummate this sacrifice, too long delayed, when some unforeseen circumstances, of which I have no need to give you an account, constrained me to abandon the design. I saw myself placed in the alternative of either running headlong to my own destruction, or of renouncing my views upon your Rhodiska: but in taking this last resolution, which, indeed, was the only one I could choose, I saw my victim escape, and my vengeance remain incomplete. What a stab to me!—Luckily, in looking over

the contents of your cloaths, I discovered that the liberty of Rhodiska would be more fatal for her and yourself than the prolongation of her captivity. It then cost me little to suffer her to depart from this place, and to return to Cracow, where she has been for some time, and has met with delight your predilected friend, and her future husband."

"Man, inspired by the genius of crime!" cried Rosomaski, with all the transport of indignation, "I perceive what are your dreadful views; but your hopes will never be realized; your manœuvres Providence will avert."

"You flatter yourself," replied Lanfranco; "the testimony of your eyes, which she does not doubt, has persuaded her of the reality of your death. Your last injunctions, which I have caused to be delivered to her at Cracow, will leave her and Ludowico no other choice than that of obeying a beloved husband, and a tender friend; so that I shall have the happiness
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of converting even the affections of a wife and the attachment of a friend into a poisonous draught for you. Without speaking of the amiable qualities of Ludowico, which call to her remembrance those of her dear husband, Rhodiska is in absolute want of a defender for herself and your son Ladislaus, who, you already know, has been restored to her. After some slight struggles, Rhodiska has promised Ludowico to accomplish your last wish, and to become his spouse: she is as well satisfied to replace you by your friend, as he finds himself happy to succeed you in the possession of so rare a treasure. The day which you yourself have fixed for the happy epoch when this mournful widow is to find consolation in the arms of your friend, draws near; and on the day three months after that on which she imagined your head severed from your trunk, she will bury her grief in new endearments. As soon as this happy union shall have been consummated, I shall restore you to liberty, and shall cause you to be conveyed

to Cracow, that you may congratulate your Rhodiska and friend; on their scrupulous exactness in fulfilling your last intentions."

"Vile wretch!" cried Rosomaski; "how outrageous and atrocious is thy irony!—Why do you make use of this affected coolness to drive me to despair?—Why do you fear to give yourself up, in my presence, to all the transports of your inhuman joy?—it sparkles in your eyes; your breath is impregnated with it. No longer restrain your odious joy; there is nothing which can add to the abhorrence in which I hold you."

"Well," replied Lanfranco, raising his voice, "since you provoke me, learn that I view with ecstacy the abyss of wretchedness which I have dug under your steps.—To see you suffer, and add fresh fuel to my hopes of increasing your anguish, is to me voluptuous. I figure with delight that instant so precious to my ulcerated heart, when, entering into your house, you shall
find

And your wife united to Ludowico, and your place in the nuptial couch occupied by a man, now your friend, then become hateful to your sight. For you and Rhodiska, what stupefaction!—For Ludowico, whom I must involve in my vengeance, what remorse!—To all the family, what a cause of indignation!—To me, what a glorious triumph!—Already I think I drink the tears which I shall cause to be shed.—Your emotions will still be kept alive, when, soon after, I shall convey to you your Paulina, then the wife of the *worthy* Gramani.”

Rosomaski could hear no more of a discourse so revolting to humanity, without groaning with fury. His convulsive agonies and writhings could only be compared to those which that faithful and courageous animal, the mastiff, at the sight of its master sinking under the blows of a malefactor, whilst its chain withholds it from flying upon him. Forgetting that he is oppressed with chains, Rosomaski springs forward to

seize Lanfranco, but his efforts only serve to mangle his limbs; the fetters which restrain him, only irritate still more the impetuous torrent of his rage; he regards Lanfranco, and seems to dart from his eyes flashing lightning, the death which his impatient hands would instantly inflict upon him if they were unconfined. He exclaims—

“ Monster ! for whom crimes are a food, and the tears of others a nectar, arm thy hands with a keen scymitar; break my chains, and dare me to my manhood; I wish for no other weapons than my rage; and as I plunged one of my hands down thy impure throat, I would drag out thy black heart, as the Indian hunter pulls out that of a wild beast. Let me die, so it be but upon thy expiring body !”

Rosomaski had no strength to utter more words; exhausted by his terrible emotions and convulsive agonies, he felt his tongue cleave to his burning palate, and his trembling knees sink under him. He fell on
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the ground, writhing and lashing it like a wounded bull, and like it, bellowing out his furious groans.

Lanfranco, who, by a refinement of cruelty, was accustomed to suspend his tortures at the moment when he began to fear for the life of his victims, left the prison of Rosomaski, retired to his usual retreat, and dispatched some of his agents to give assistance to that unfortunate man, and to free him from the weight of his chains.

CHAP. XI.

RHODISKA was continually plunged into the most melancholy reveries; still full of the image of her Rosomaski, she waited, with a painful sensation, for the day which, according to his will, was to unite her to Ludowico. Though she entertained for Ludowico as much friendship as esteem, yet she could not, whenever she reflected on this new union, refrain from delivering herself up to the most gloomy ideas.

The epoch of the approaching ceremony drew near, and, at last, the day preceding that on which it was to take place, broke forth. Rhodiska, Theresia, and Ludowico, were

were all occupied with the events of the next day; but how different were their sensations!—Rhodiska felt her detestation of the new chains which were preparing for her increase, in proportion as the time of her widowhood decreased; and she needed all her respect for the memory of her Rosotnaski, and all her fears of outraging his manes, to prevent her from rejecting them. Theresia thought her doom inevitably sealed, and regretted her former insensibility. Ludowico had experienced a considerable alteration in his sentiments, since he had made the unexpected discovery of those of Theresia; in fact, he had loved from the very first moment he had beheld her at Vistulof, after he had rescued her from a premature and painful death. The thoughts of her insensibility had only damped his rising flame; but the knowledge of her affection for him had, in spite of himself, and of those chains which he had bound himself by a solemn oath, to put on, convinced him

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that

that Rhodiska possessed only his admiration, esteem, and friendship, but that Theresia had engaged his love long ago. Never did two hearts, so closely linked in the bonds of esteem and friendship, as those of Rhodiska and Ludowico, pine at the thoughts of being joined in a closer union!

Rhodiska, whom the sight of Theresia sinking into deep despondency rendered still more unhappy, was so extremely agitated, that she was compelled to retire to her chamber very early, on the only night which would intervene between the awful day whose appearance she dreaded. Repose fled from her eyes, and a thousand painful reflections banished sleep from her couch of thorns.

“I am going, then,” said she, “to cease to be the widow of Rosomaski; that title, sad as it was, is still dear to me; how have I been able to resolve to lose it!—It seems to me that, by entering into another marriage, I am about to divorce myself from the memory of the tender and unfortunate

Rosomaski,

Rosomaski, whose mangled image pursues me every where, and whose loss I still bewail, as if it had but this instant happened. Why, then, have I yielded to this dreaded engagement?—But have I been at liberty to refuse it?—Oh, my dear Rosomaski! it was you who imposed on me the direful necessity. By attaching the utmost importance to the execution of this design, you have exacted from Ludowico a solemn oath, to fulfil scrupulously all your intentions. The new husband whom you designed for me, and whose consent you have bound, was the friend of your heart, the object of your tenderest affection; he was your defender and deliverer. Whatever he has done for you has given him a right to my gratitude; he has even acquired a stronger interest by his modesty, his disinterestedness, and the delicate manner in which he has claimed the exercise of the rights which he held from the sacred intentions of his friend Rosomaski; and without doubt, is worthy of being my husband, if

I had never known my Rosomaski. Ah! the bare remembrance of him still staggers my resolution!—I feel that time will never cicatrize the wound which his death has made in my heart. My love for Rosomaski survives himself, and dictates to me that I should not outrage his memory, if I should abstain from executing a plan which he had only designed for my own interest. But I deceive myself, when I think that Rosomaski, in designing Ludowico for my husband, consulted my interest; he must have done me the justice to think that it was my interest, since it was for my happiness to live for him alone. He could have no other end than to secure to his son a guardian, a protector, a friend, another father. Ought I, then, to oppose what he has intended for the welfare of this amiable child, now the only object of my maternal solicitude?—On the contrary, ought I not to second it?—But how painful is this duty to fulfil!—How shall I resolve!—What contrary sentiments agitate and
struggle

struggle within me!—Every preparation is made for my new marriage, and yet I hesitate!—But I have given my word!—Oh, dearest Rosomaski! why have you laid this severe injunction upon me?—How wretched I am!”

The troubled imagination of Rhodiska still floated in the midst of the tumultuous vortex of those vacillating and uncertain resolutions, when the reflections of the Aurora, insinuating themselves into her chamber, came to announce the birth of that day which was to decide her fate.

Rhodiska rose at the usual hour to adorn her person, if that may be called ornament which concealed far greater beauties; but no new cloaths, no superb ornaments, none of those preparations, which bespeak expecting happiness, employed her attention; she put on only the dress which she had worn on the preceding day. She was surprised that Theresia, who had always been accustomed to come to her apartment, should omit her visit on so solemn day.—

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She was about to seek her in her own apartment, when she saw her pass by the door, accompanied by her waiting-woman. Theresia was not in her usual morning dress; but that which she wore was so plain and negligent, that she could not be suspected of an intention to assist, in such a state, at the nuptial ceremony of her friend; it had rather the appearance of her having prepared herself to take a morning's walk. The meeting with Rhodiska evidently embarrassed her. Rhodiska perceived it; and the melancholy air which she also observed on her countenance, suggested to her some suspicions.

"My dear Theresia," said Rhodiska, "whither are you going?—Can you desert me at a moment when I have the most need of your friendship?"

"Rhodiska," replied Theresia, with an air of constraint, "you must know how much I am devoted to you; I shall put up the most ardent prayers for your happiness, but you must excuse me from assisting at
the

the approaching ceremony. An affair of the utmost importance, since the greater part of my fortune depends upon it, obliges me to absent myself for some days."

"Oh, Theresia," rejoined Rhodiska, drawing her into her apartment, "is your absence so indispensably necessary, that I must be deprived of my dearest friend on a day like this?—I was coming to you to ask your advice."

"On what subject?"

"Would you believe, Theresia, that the nearer the moment of marrying Ludowico approaches, (here an involuntary sigh escaped from the bosom of Theresia) the more I feel my uncertainty increase."

"Can you hesitate, Rhodiska, to fulfil the last wish of your dear Rosomaski?"

As she uttered these words, the looks of Theresia became more serene.

"Alas!" replied Rhodiska, "my heart is so troubled, that I cannot ascertain its real situation. In a single minute I change my mind several times; I feel myself so
vibrating,

vibrating, that I have need of a friend to steady me. Do not refuse, then, to come to my aid, and to delay your departure till to-morrow."

"It would give me infinite pleasure, Rhodiska, to give you new proofs of my affection; but it is impossible that I should suspend the business which I am going upon."

"Ah, my Theresia, your departure so unexpectedly must have other motives, which you conceal from me; for I know you are too generous to let a pecuniary matter shut your ear to the entreaties of a friend."

"You are not deceived, my Rhodiska; I should prefer the pleasure of being useful to you to all the riches in the universe."

"I conjure you then not to disguise from me the true motive which induces you to leave me at such a season."

"Do not exact it from me; I pray you, in the name of friendship, to permit me to follow my intentions."

"If

“If I should persist in performing the promise which I have given to Ludowico, would you behold my new marriage with dissatisfaction?”

“Dear Rhodiska,” said Theresia, with an accent of stifled grief, “why prolong this conversation?—Do not insist on my remaining with you to-day.”

“What means this evasive answer, my Theresia?—Ah, I comprehend—it would cost you too much to witness my marriage with Ludowico. What are the reasons of this repugnance?”

“Do not persist in making those enquiries; be satisfied with knowing that I wish you every thing which can render you happy. Ludowico is sure to make the happiness of the sensible woman who will possess him.”

As Theresia uttered these words, she did not so well support the part of dissimulation, which she had performed tolerably till then, but that Rhodiska instantly penetrated the secret cause of her inward distraction.

Theresia

Theresia had prepared her for the discovery by her involuntary sighs; and the expressive tone in which she delivered the eulogy on Ludowico, cleared away the mist from Rhodiska's eyes.

"Will you forgive me," said Rhodiska, "for having guessed at what you wish to conceal from me? I pardon you for having wronged my friendship, by withholding from it your confidence. Treat me, then, with that indulgence which I shew to you."

"I do not understand you," said Theresia, confused.

"Well, then—you love Ludowico."

"I?"

"Yes, you, my dear friend; and it is in vain to deny it."

Theresia kept silence; but her trouble betrayed that Rhodiska had touched upon the right key.

"Yes, my dear Theresia, you love Ludowico."

"I see," replied Theresia, "that I have dissembled in vain. Yes, I love Ludowico,
and

and my attachment to him is more ardent, as it has been so long constrained. I love him," added she, blushing, and dropping some tears, "but I would have wished it concealed from the whole world, and from myself. I have not been able to subdue my heart; but my reason has not yet been wholly vanquished. I was incapable of undertaking any thing to interrupt your marriage with Ludowico; but I find I do not possess resolution sufficient to render myself a spectatress of it. The excuses which I have given for my absence, are only my inventions to conceal my grief and weakness. At the moment of our meeting I was going to leave you, never to meet again. I should have quitted you, however, putting up ardent prayers for your felicity, and deploring the fatal conjunctures which banished me far from my dearest friend."

"Cruel Theresia!—have you been able to seclude this secret so long in your heart from me? You must have distrusted my friendship;

friendship ; what became, then, of that delicious exchange of reciprocal confidence and advice to which we had habituated ourselves ?—You loved Ludowico, and feared to acquaint me with it ; the restraint which you suffered, the inward struggles which you experienced, were the causes of those clouds of sorrow which I have often observed on your countenance, and which I attributed to your melancholy humour. Why had I not sooner known the sentiment which you did yourself the violence to keep down to the bottom of your aching heart ?—By revealing it to me, you would not only have given me a flattering testimony of your confidence, but we might both have reaped advantage from it. I know how to make sacrifices to the respect which is due to the will of the dead, to maternal affection, and gratitude ; I also know how to make them to friendship.—The act would have recompensed itself, since I should have saved you from the torments of an unhappy passion, and myself

self from the punishment of being a prey to the most cruel uncertainty."

"Dear Rhodiska," said Theresia, embracing her with an overflow of sensibility, "such generous principles fill me with admiration and gratitude. You behold me softened by them, but think no more of my situation; there is no longer time; you have engaged your faith; the priest awaits you on the steps of the altar. Ludowico loves you; it is doubtful whether he ever would have attached himself to me; let not the idea of my grief plunge you into new irresolutions: your tenderness for me touches and penetrates to the inmost recesses of my heart; but it belongs to him who has loaded you with benefits, and whose delicate sentiments so well deserve the tenderest return. He applauds himself for having obtained your consent, which he believes to be irrevocable; think how he will be hurt, if he find it still wavering and indecisive. I love him for himself; let him be happy, and my wishes are

are satisfied. Since another must be his wife, it is less painful to me that that other is my dearest friend. Touched at the virtues of Ludowico, I have not been able to prevent their making a deep impression; undoubtedly it will cost me much to obliterate it; but I hope that the hand of time will efface it insensibly, especially if I condemn myself to behold this too amiable man no more."

Some tears, which accompanied these last words, discovered that her tongue did not speak the language of her heart.

At that instant a domestic entered, and announced to Rhodiska that a stranger, who had all the appearance of having come from a long journey, requested an immediate private interview with her, on business which would admit of no delay, and was of the last importance to her. Rhodiska was much surprised at this message; but she felt an impulse to give it immediate attention. "Before I go," said she to Theresia, "make me only one promise, which

which is, at least, due to my friendship, and cannot be injurious to your feelings—it is, that you will not leave the house till I see you again, which shall be previously to the ceremony, if it be to take place.”

“I promise,” replied Theresia.

“Perhaps——” said Rhodiska; but as if she recollected herself, she made signs to the domestic to conduct her to the room where the stranger was waiting for her, and left Theresia without uttering another word.

Ludowico had been for some time expecting the ladies would quit their chambers; but he experienced none of those impatient anxieties which attend a blissful bridegroom. He had taken up a book, to distract those reflections to which he had delivered himself during the greater part of the preceding night, and which were by no means of a pleasant nature, when a servant opened the door, and ushered in Giovanni. In an instant those two friends were locked in each others arms, without

without either of them breaking silence: at length Ludowico ventured to ask whether the subterraneans of Lanfranco's castle on the shores of the lake of Guarda had been explored, and whether he had discovered his Paulina?

"Furnished with such letters as I have been," replied Giovanni, "the government of Venice could not refrain from taking a lively interest in this surprising affair; but they appeared to doubt my having been misinformed of the place where the atrocious crimes of Lanfranco had been carried into execution, as he had long ago sold his castle on the shores of the lake of Guarda, to one of the principal magistrates of the city of Venice, who was, besides, a man of character, and would never give a sanction to such vile proceedings under his roof. The proprietor of the castle was no sooner acquainted with the affair, than he readily consented to lend every assistance in his power to clear up the affair, and even attended us to the castle,

castle, when we went to explore it; but we discovered nothing to give us the least suspicion that the subterraneans of that castle had ever been the scene of such nefarious transactions. In short, they did not, in a single instance, answer the description which Rhodiska gave in her letter of those which had been the place of her confinement. It is evident that the subterraneans of the castle on the shores of the lake of Guarda, have never been the theatre of Lanfranco's atrocities."

Whilst Giovanni and Ludowico were lost in astonishment, and guessing at the retreat of the vile Lanfranco, Rhodiska was in no less astonishment at the intelligence which was brought her by the stranger, who was no other person than the Jew Ishmael.

Having suffered a sufficient time to elapse, to persuade Rhodiska not only that she herself had been brought from the lake of Guarda, but that he himself had followed her from that distance, he began to grow

impatient to receive those marks of her gratitude which, he flattered himself, she had given him hopes to attain. Having, therefore, disguised himself, which was a necessary precaution, as he was well known in Cracow, he arrived at the door of the house where Rhodiska lodged, and desired immediate admission to her. The domestic who answered at the door had informed him that his mistress was then very busily engaged, and as she would be so during the rest of the day, it was very uncertain whether he could see her. Ishmael persisted that his business would admit of no delay; that it concerned her nearly; and as he had come from a great distance, he must return immediately with his answer. The domestic introduced him to the servants' hall, (as the shabbiness of his dress bespoke him to be nothing more than a common messenger) whilst he went to acquaint Rhodiska with what had passed. Theresia's waiting-woman, who still attended in the gallery, without the chamber

chamber in which Rhodiska and Theresia had conversed together, would not suffer him to interrupt them, as she thought they were on particular business, by their withdrawing out of her hearing.

CHAP. XII.

WHILST they were both waiting in the gallery for the appearance of Rhodiska and Theresia, Ishmael had collected from the garrulity of the other servants in the hall, who, as is usual with the tribe, were resolved, whether the intended bride and bridegroom were happy or not, that they would not suffer so joyous an occasion to slip over without being themselves merry,

that Rhodiska was to be married on that very day to the friend of her late husband. This intelligence was likely to prove a mortal blow to the hopes of Ishmael; and he was at no loss to know that it proceeded from the hand of Lanfranco. As Lanfranco had never concealed any of his criminal enterprises from Ishmael, till he was become jealous of his designs upon Rhodiska, he had acquainted Ishmael, in the intoxication of his success, with the scene in the hall hung with black, and had even shewn him Rosomaski's will, which was at that time found in his cloaths. Ishmael had never been so blinded by Lanfranco's artifices, as to suppose that he would ever desist from his criminal attempts upon Rhodiska; but he could not help being surprised at the readiness with which he consented to liberate her. His eyes were now opened to the use to which Lanfranco had put the will of Rosomaski, but which he had kept a secret from him. Enraged at being thus over-reached, and at finding that

that Rhodiska was not yet free from the trammels of Lanfranco, he determined to repay him in his own currency, and to defeat his malice, whilst he delayed the nuptial ceremony, which would have been so fatal to his own hopes. He had just come to this resolution when the domestic returned, and shewed him into a parlour, where Rhodiska expected him.

"Do you know me again, Madam?" said Ishmael.

"Yes," replied Rhodiska; "you are the person to whose humanity I owe my liberation from the hands of Lanfranco."

"The same, Madam; and you may also recollect that I promised to follow you to Cracow: but I do not come now with the intention of putting your gratitude to any trial; the end of my present journey is to confer on you still further obligations."

"Oh, Heaven!" cried Rhodiska, "I remember that you gave me hopes of restoring my Paulina to me. You will, indeed, lay me under an obligation."

"Your daughter is still where she was," said Ishmael, interrupting her; "but she is safe, and I renew my promise of restoring her to you at some future time; yet my present business is of a more important nature. Give me leave to ask if you have not, by some means or other, received a paper, purporting to be the last will of your husband?"

"I have—from Lanfranco himself."

"And you are going to obey it?"

Rhodiska blushed, and looked confused, but could make no reply.

"Well," continued Ishmael, "you will now see whether I have not a right to say that I am going to confer a further obligation. That will was indeed your Rosomaski's; but it was only transmitted to you by your insatiate enemy, to seal your destruction, by plunging you into a second marriage, *whilst your first is not dissolved.*"

"Oh, Heavens!" cried Rhodiska, "is not my Rosomaski dead then?"

"No more than I am."

Rhodiska

Rhodiska hung down her head, and experienced for some minutes such mingled emotions of joy, surprise, and shame, as neither pen nor pencil could describe.—At length she begged Ishmael to explain himself. He told her the stratagem which had been made use of to persuade her that the real Rosomaski had fallen under the blow of a scymitar, which had only disjointed the neck of a wax representation.

“Oh!” cried Rhodiska, rising, and taking Ishmael by the hand, “if you do not deceive me, what a scene of wretchedness have you rescued me from!—Already the abyss gaped for me; another hour, and——”

She could utter no more. Ishmael perceived that she was about to sink to the ground, and he was rejoiced in the opportunity which it afforded him of taking her in his arms to convey her to a seat. When Rhodiska was somewhat recovered, Ishmael told her that he must stay no longer at present, but that she should hear from him in

a short time; and it would be her own fault if she did not welcome her husband and daughter to Cracow in less than a month.

"Stay but for another moment," cried Rhodiska; "there is one other person, to whom I wish you to reveal what you have just now discovered to me."

"Permit me to depart this instant," replied Ishmael, "or I shall leave your husband and daughter to their fate, and you will never behold them again."

The latter terrifying alternative silenced Rhodiska; she grasped Ishmael's hand, and calling him her best benefactor, summoned the servant to attend him to the door.

Rhodiska then flew back to Theresia, and embracing her, exclaimed—"Oh, my dearest friend, give me joy of my husband!"

—Theresia freed herself from her embrace, and gave her a look which at once charged Rhodiska with injury and insult. Rhodiska instantly perceived her error, and added—

"Yes, my husband, my Rosomaski!"

"Rosomaski!"

"Yes,

"Yes, he lives."

"By what means have you made this discovery?"

"Oh, come with me; I am going to carry the joyful tidings to Ludowico, who, I am assured, will bless himself at the timely interruption which has checked our career on the very brink of misery."

They went to seek Ludowico: but what was the astonishment of Rhodiska, to behold her dearest friend and generous benefactor, Giovanni, sitting with him!—Rhodiska instantly threw herself into his arms, and cried out—"Oh my Giovanni! my dear son, as I yet hope to have a right to call you, I give you joy; give me joy also; our Paulina lives, and so does our Rosomaski!"

Ludowico and Giovanni had been so earnestly employed in conjectures, as to the scene of Lanfranco's villanies, that the former had never acquainted the latter with the nuptial ceremony which was intended to take place on that day. Gio-

vanno was surprised and rejoiced at this exclamation of Rhodiska; but Ludowico was almost petrified, to think of the ruin which he had so narrowly escaped. "Where, where is my Rosomaski?" cried he; "what a happy interference of Providence!"

"Where is my Paulina?" cried Giovanni.

"They are both still in the subterraneans of the castle of Lanfranco, on the shores of the lake of Guarda."

"Then it is all a delusion," replied Giovanni; "if they had been there, I must have found them: nay, they never can have been there; you yourself have never been there."

The faces of the whole groupe, which had beamed with a temporary glow of transport, were now either cast sorrowfully towards the ground, or looking wistfully at each other, when Theresia again desired Rhodiska to inform them how she had received the news of her husband's being alive. Rhodiska did so.

"Ah!"

“ Ah ! how unfortunate it is,” cried Ludowico, “ that you should have permitted that person to depart; he is an accomplice of Lanfranco by his own confession; and it is only from private pique, or to answer some other end, that he has been induced to procure your deliverance. If I had seen him, I should never have lost sight of him again, till I had extracted from him the secret of Lanfranco’s retreat: all that we can now do, is to watch for him coming hither again, if he ever should keep his word.”

They then again fell into conjectures on the lurking-place of Lanfranco; and Ludowico was of opinion that it must be either in the subterraneans of Vistulof, which had formerly been the scene of his abominable stratagems, or in some of the mountains adjoining to it. He expressed his positive determination to set out for Vistulof on the following morning, to the great satisfaction both of Rhodiska and Theresia; for though the latter was cha-

grined at losing him again, yet she was in hopes that his researches would produce the discovery of Rosomaski, and the putting an end to his union with Rhodiska.—Giovanno offered to accompany Ludowico, but he thought it best to go alone, that the motives of his journey might be the less subject to discovery.

The domestics had been in eager expectation, during the whole of the day, of the celebration of the nuptial ceremony, which was to be the signal for the commencement of their carousal; but to their infinite surprise, and no less mortification, the day elapsed, and not a syllable was heard about it.

Between the parties themselves, and their two friends, Theresia and Giovanno, not a syllable was uttered on the occasion. The three former retired to rest, somewhat more composed than on the preceding night.

At daybreak, Ludowico was on the road to Vistulof; and some days elapsed, which were passed by his friends at Cracow in earnest expectation

expectation of Ishmael, whom they had preconcerted to detain, at all events, if he should again make his appearance ; but they neither saw nor heard from him.

One evening, the faithful Tomaso, who had, as usual, accompanied his master, ran into the room where he was sitting with Rhodiska and Theresia, without any previous ceremony, and, almost speechless through want of breath, he exclaimed—

“I have seen him !—I have seen him !”

“Who ?” demanded Giovanni.

“Gramani.”

“Ah !” cried Giovanni, starting up, “then our game is not far off. Why did you not follow him ?”

“I did,” replied Tomaso, “till I could follow him no farther. I saw him in the street on horseback ; at first I disbelieved my eyes, but I crossed him in so many different directions, still turning away my head whenever he looked towards me, that I would swear it was he. When I had convinced myself, I fell back behind him, and
continued

continued to keep him in sight till he reached one of the city gates ; but he was no sooner on the outside, than he set off at a gallop, and soon distanced me."

"Should you know the way to that gate again?" demanded Giovanni.

"Yes; for I took care to pay particular attention to the way as I returned."

Giovanni then desired that one of the domestics, who was perfectly acquainted with all the roads leading to Cracow, should instantly go with Tomaso, and bring back word what road Gramani had taken.

A gleam of hope again began to suffuse itself over the faces of the friends; and in less than an hour Tomaso and the other domestic returned, with intelligence that the road which Gramani had pursued, was that which led to Zabno.

"Then I myself will go thither to-morrow," said Giovanni; "and if Tomaso be not mistaken——"

"If I should have been," cried Tomaso,
"I shall

"I shall never care to trust my eyes again, if it be to no farther distance than the tip of my nose."

"Well, then," continued Giovanni, "be ready with horses for yourself and me at the door, at sunrise to-morrow."

Tomaso was punctual, and Giovanni did not keep him waiting. They mounted and rode off towards Zabno. When they arrived, Tomaso was ordered to disguise himself, and keep a look-out, whilst another person was engaged to enquire throughout the town for the name of Gramani; but no one had ever heard such a name before.— Four days elapsed in this fruitless search; when, on the evening of the fifth, Tomaso appeared before his master, and acquainted him that he had again seen Gramani; that he came out of a house (which he had marked so as to be able to find it again readily), mounted a horse, which was held for him by a servant also mounted, and they both rode off together. Giovanni bade Tomaso to return to the neighbourhood of that house,

house, and procure lodgings in sight of it, if possible. Tomaso succeeded; and that night Giovanni and he removed thither from the inn, at which they had before lodged.

The next day, Giovanni stationed Tomaso at one of the windows, to keep a look-out for Gramani, and to give him notice when he saw him, that Giovanni might add the testimony of his own eyes to that of Tomaso's. During the whole day, he watched in vain, till nearly towards the same time of the evening on which he had seen him the preceding day. He then came to announce to Giovanni that the same servant on horseback had arrived at the door, leading a horse for Gramani. As it was nearly dark, and Giovanni thought he might follow them without danger of a discovery, he ordered Tomaso to hasten and lead to the door of the lodgings his own horses, which had been left at the inn.— Tomaso returned with them before Gramani had made his appearance. Giovanni then

then armed himself, and ordered Tomaso to follow his example. Giovanni then remained at the window, in the utmost impatience, till Tomaso cried out—"There he comes, or it is high time for me to make use of spectacles."—Giovanni looked at the person for an instant or two, and then bade Tomaso follow him. They mounted their horses, and pursued the track which Gramani (for it was he himself) and his servant had taken, and which led to the Carpathian mountains, in which Lanfranco held his magazine of crimes. They followed at such a distance as that they could just keep them in sight, and beheld all their motions by the light of the moon, which just then began to shine. They dogged them till they arrived at the entrance into the defile, where they observed all the precautions which they took to pursue with safety the dangerous route which conducted to the mouth of the mysterious caverns. They took care to follow them in all their serpentine windings, to avoid the.

the bogs on either side, and steered their course in the same direction. When Gramani stopped at the brook, they stopped; they saw in what manner he made use of the moveable bridge to cross it, which he had no sooner accomplished than he vanished from their sight. The servant, who had accompanied him, did not cross the brook, but immediately returned by the way he came, leading Gramani's horse, which he had quitted. Giovanni and Tomaso concealed themselves behind one of the craggy rocks, which terminated the road on either hand, till he came close to them, when they instantly seized him, and presenting their pistols on each side, menaced him with death if he did not instantly comply with their demands; the first of which was to conduct them safely out of the defile. The man, who suspected them to belong to some of those gangs of banditti with which the Carpathian mountains were, at that time, infested, begged them to spare his life, and offered them
what

what money he had ; but Giovanni replied that they neither wanted his life nor money ; and that if he complied with his demands, he would give him such a handsome recompence, as would enable him to get an honest livelihood than by attaching himself to so great a villain as was Gramani, his master."

" I serve no such person," replied the man ; " you must be mistaken."

" Conduct us first out of this place," said Giovanni, " and then we will talk at our leisure as we return to Zabno, which I suppose was your intention before we surprised you."

" It was so," replied the man.

When they had repassed the entrance of the defile, Giovanni demanded what name his master bore, and what was his profession ? As this servant had been only a short time in the service of Gramani, he had not acquired that *sang froid* and firmness which is the characteristic of a person inured to crimes. He was intimidated, and again
begged

begged for mercy, declaring that he would reveal whatever he knew. Giovanni immediately put into his hand a purse, the weight of which would have been sufficient to have staggered his attachment to Gramani, if it had been much stronger than it really was. He told Giovanni that he was a poor man, but of an unblemished character, a native of Zabno, where he was well known; that all he had ever known of his master was that he was a stranger, very lately come to Zabno; that he gave himself out to be a German naturalist, of the name of Dolbrom, who had come into the neighbourhood of the Carpathian mountains, in search of ores, spars, shells, and other fossils, to complete his collection of natural curiosities; that he attended him every evening to the end of the defile which they had just left, and which led to the shaft of an exhausted mine, where he always passed his nights.

"There must be some persons in the mine," said Giovanni, "or how could he descend without assistance?"

"It

"It is inhabited," replied the man, "but by what kind of persons I cannot guess.—Whenever he, or any of those belonging to the mine, want to descend, they are furnished with a particular copper medal, which they drop down the shaft; this serves to inform the workmen placed below, who raise up, by means of a machine, a platform on which they descend into these dark abodes. Here is that which has been given to me for the purpose."

Giovanno took it out of his hand, and demanded if he would not rather serve a man whose actions were open to the day, than one whose deeds were enveloped in darkness?—The man protested, that however appearances might seem against his master, he had never seen the least harm in him: he added, that he was indeed tired of serving a master who was almost buried in darkness; but that he had greater wages than were usually given by other masters in Zabno.

"Leave his horses at the usual place then,"

then," said Giovanni, "and attach yourself to me; you will have no reason to be ashamed of your master, nor to be dissatisfied with his liberality."

"I have already had a convincing proof of the latter," replied the man; "and I shall be happy to do something to deserve it."

When they reached Zabno, they went with the man to see him put up his horses; for they would not quit him, lest he should find means to acquaint Gramani with the strange adventure which had happened to him, and put him on his own defence, or, perhaps, contrivance to do themselves a mischief. When the horses were safely delivered, they took him home with them, Giovanni, that night, paid his landlord one month's rent in advance, and told him that he should set out for Cracow very early the following morning; but should return either that night or the next day. The landlord was perfectly satisfied with this behaviour of his lodger, and desired him to take

take the keys of his rooms with him; but Giovanni declined the offer, adding, that he had as much confidence in the landlord, as the latter had wished to repose in him. This matter being settled, and a horse hired for the new servant, they retired to rest, and at daybreak took the road to Cracow.



CHAP. XIII.

LUDOWICO had returned from Vistula only a few hours before Giovanni arrived from Zdobno. He had visited the castle, under pretence of his having been formerly in the army with the late proprietor, of whose removal he affected not to have been apprised. Not one of the people
whom

whom Rosomaski had left in it, were there at that time. The person who officiated as steward received Ludowico with all the frankness of an honest man; and upon his enquiring who was the present proprietor of Vistulof, informed him that he did not know; he was only placed there to receive the rents from the tenants, which were called for soon after the quarter-day, by a person who was unknown to him.— From all that Ludowico could learn, it appeared, either that Vistulof was not the scene of Lanfranco's vengeance, or that the inhabitants of that castle were total strangers to his misdeeds.

Giovanno's account of his journey renewed the hopes of all concerned, that some happy discovery would be speedily made. A doubt whether Gramani's haunts could be those in which the Rosomaskis had suffered so much, was started by Rhodiska, who could not conceive but that she must have crossed some lake or river to reach the latter. Giovanno, who remembered
the

the brook over which he had seen Gramani pass, by means of the moveable bridge, supposed that, in order to deceive his captives, he had caused them to be rowed up and down on it, before the carriage had entered the mine by some other passage, which was gently sloped so as to admit it. Gramani's servant was questioned whether he knew of any other entrance into the subterranean than that by means of the platform? he replied, that the mine must have some communication with those of Wielitska, since he had left Gramani at the mouth of the entrance, which was descended by the platform, at night, and had, by his directions, waited for him at one of the entrances into the mines of Wielitska on the next morning. This intelligence seemed to remove their doubt; and Ludowico and Giovanni, accompanied by Tomaso, and Gramani's servant, soon left Cracow for Zabno, where they determined to act as circumstances might require. They all repaired to Giovanni's lodgings, muffled

up in their great coats, to prevent surprise, and placed themselves at the windows. It was not long before Giovanni exclaimed—“There, that is Gramani, walking arm in arm with another man.”—After a moment’s pause, he started up, and cried out—“Look out, Tomaso; as I live, that other person is Dolgorucki, who was a prisoner with us among the banditti, in the Genoese mountains!”

“It is the same person,” replied Tomaso; “that is Dolgorucki, indeed.”

Ludowico, whose whole attention had been at first drawn towards Gramani, of whom he had heard so much, but never seen before, no sooner had his eyes diverted to the other person by Giovanni’s and Tomaso’s conversation, than he started up in the most indescribable transports, and exclaimed—

“Talk no more of Dolgorucki; by Heavens, that is the miscreant Lanfranco himself!”

He was about to fly out of the room,
when

when Giovanni held him by the arm, and entreated him, in the most earnest manner, not to ruin them all by any act of intemperance. He represented, that if they should happen to miss in their first blow, Lanfranco would, in all probability, assassinate Rosomaski and Paulina, and fly beyond their reach, or otherwise convey them away with him to some other retreat, which might never be discovered; he added, that Lanfranco must have had numerous accomplices, to work his complicated engines of vengeance; and that it was more than probable he never appeared in public, without having some of them at hand to prevent a surprise. Ludowico was satisfied with these prudential remonstrances, and resumed his seat, where he continued for a few moments, apparently lost in reflection. He then started up again, and exclaimed—

“I have it: you are right, my friend, Giovanni; we must make the first blow a sure one. It shall be so; wait here for me till to-morrow.”

He was again going to leave the room, when Giovanni once more intreated him to take no precipitate measure.

“Fear not,” replied Ludowico; “I have abandoned the first sallies of fury; keep yourself close till to-morrow, and rely upon my returning with such a net to spread over that savage beast, Lanfranco, as shall baffle all his strength and efforts to break through it.” He then hastened to the inn, remounted his horse, and rode back to Cracow. It was a late hour, but he instantly went to the citadel, and desired the centinel to pass the word that Ludowico wished to speak with the Governor on the most important business. Zedeo was no sooner acquainted with his friend’s message, than he ordered that he should be instantly admitted.

Ludowico, during their confinement, had acquainted his fellow-prisoner with the sufferings of the Rosomaskis; and he was no sooner admitted into his presence, than he informed him of the manner in which the haunts of their cruel persecutor had
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been discovered, and requested that he would furnish him with a guard of soldiers to ferret him out. Zedeo not only readily consented, but insisted upon leading them in person, to bring to punishment a miscreant who had so long eluded every pursuit of justice. He ordered the drums to beat the usual roll-call on the parade, and in ten minutes, word was brought that the soldiers were ready to obey his orders.—Zedeo then desired Ludowicō to accompany him to the parade; where he told the soldiers, in a short harangue, that he wanted fifty of them to go on an expedition, but that he should take none but volunteers; a general shout was given, and the whole corps expressed their readiness to turn out. The number which Zedeo had fixed upon, were instantly chosen, and ordered to march to Zabno; to pass through the town at night, without making any halt; and to wait for the Governor a mile beyond it, on the road leading to the Carpathian mountains. Zedeo

and Ludowico then retired to take a little repose ; and at the earliest dawn of day, they were on their route to Zabno.

When they arrived, they roused Giovanni, and informed him what force they had sent on before them. Giovanni was delighted, and having mounted his horse, the whole party moved forwards, towards the spot where Zedeo had appointed the soldiers to wait. When they arrived at the place, a council of war was held, in which it was concluded that they should separate into two parties: one of which, headed by Ludowico, and guided by Gramani's servant, should go to that entrance of the mines of Wielitska where the latter had formerly awaited for Gramani; the other, headed by Zedeo, and conducted by Giovanni and Tomaso, should descend by the shaft into the Carpathian mountains. The greatest obstacle in their way was to plan their movements, so as that both parties should come into action at the same time. It was computed that the distance to the

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entrance

entrance of the mines of Wielitska, and that of the Carpathian mountains, was nearly the same. Gramani's servant acquainted them that the usual time of raising and lowering the platform consumed nearly an hour; and, by the distance from the Carpathian mountains to the entrance into the mines of Wielitska, they guessed that it would require Ludowico's party nearly three hours to pass through the subterraneous communication between them. Ludowico's party would, therefore, be two hours behindhand with Zedeo's. From this calculation, it was determined that Ludowico's party should make the best of their way to the entrance into the mines of Wielitska; and after an interval of two hours, Zedeo should march his to the mouth of the descent into the Carpathian mountains. Ludowico, having with him Gramani's servant and twenty-five of the soldiers, instantly decamped, and entered the mines of Wielitska. Ludowico addressed himself to the first groupe of

miners whom he discovered, and offered a considerable reward to any of them who would discover to him the subterranean passage which led from the mines of Wielitska to an old exhausted mine in the Carpathian mountains; they all declared that they knew nothing of such a passage, but if it did exist, there was a very old miner, who had been born in the place, and had passed all his life there; this man, they said, was better acquainted with the mines and all their passages than any other person. When this old man was brought to Ludowico, and the same question put to him, he replied, that there was only one passage which could answer the description of that which they were in search of. It did, indeed, tend towards the Carpathian mountains, but it had never been explored by any person, to his knowledge. Ludowico distributed some money among the other miners, and prevailed upon the old man to be their escort to this unexplored passage. When they arrived at the entrance
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of this gloomy gallery, Ludowico informed the soldiers that there lay their route before them, which they must expect to pursue during three hours, at least. He, himself was determined to go on, if they should all desert him; but he could not entertain an idea that men of tried bravery could abandon their comrades, who were coming by another equally, if not more, dangerous route, to meet them. The reply of one of these sons of Mars was laconic, yet significant—"Lead on, if it be to—we will follow you."—They then lighted the torches with which they had been supplied, and pushed into the sombre avenue.

When the interval of two hours from the time of Ludowico's departure had elapsed, Zedeo put his men into motion. Gramani's servant, who had been ordered to return, so soon as he should have conducted Ludowico's party to the proper entrance into the mines of Wielitska, was ordered to take the lead. He piloted them safely through the defile to the brook, and dis-

played the moveable bridge on which they crossed it. He then brought them to the mouth of the shaft, into which he dropped the copper medal which he had received from Gramani. In rather more than half an hour afterwards, the signal was answered by the ascension of the astonishing platform; when it rose to a level with the edge of the shaft, the whole party placed themselves upon it. Gramani's servant then pulled a small rope, which was another signal to the workmen who attended the machine below, that every thing was prepared for the descent. Presently the machine began to lower: it was impossible not to be struck with admiration of this ingenious contrivance, which supported so vast a weight.

"Why," said Giovanni to Zedeo, "should the most industrious efforts of genius be so often the partakers and the instruments of vice?"

All the movements of the machine were constructed with such wonderful art, that,
except

except a slight groaning of the strained cables, nothing announced that it experienced any fatigue. They were the least felt, as they did not see that they descended. A little wavering in the balance appeared so like that of a boat agitated by the feeble fluctuations of the undulating waters, that it was no wonder Rhodiska, deprived of the use of sight, and struck by the noise of the water, which the banditti stirred in the tuns placed beside them, should have been led to imagine that they were floating on the surface of the lake of Guarda.

During the descent, not a syllable was uttered by the soldiers, although their astonishment was visible; but Zedeo, who knew them all to be men of tried stuff, had not the least dread of fear having any part in their sensations.

After nearly another half hour expended in the descent, Zedeo conjectured that they were nearly on a level with the arch of the gallery which contained the wheels of the machine, from his perceiving the light of

the torches which illuminated the bottom of the subterranean. He therefore ordered the soldiers to stand as close together as possible, not only to take up less room, but to conceal their numbers from those who might be watching them from below; he himself had his eyes fixed upon the workmen who governed the two horses attached to the machine. He thought he perceived that he slackened the descent of the platform; apprehending lest he might play them some trick, Zedeo took one of the soldier's muskets and levelled at him, saying to him at the same time, that he was a dead man if he stopped the horses. Struck with panic, the workman ran away, but the horses continued their circular route till the platform was only about ten or twelve feet from the ground. Without waiting any longer, Zedeo jumped on the sandy floor of the subterranean, and was instantly followed by all the rest. Presently they heard the spacious caverns and galleries resound with the cries of—"To arms!—here's

here's the enemy!—to arms!"—and all the echoes which inhabited them repeated—"To arms!"—A troop of men, armed with guns, sabres, and axes, were seen running towards them from the bottom of a long gallery. They placed themselves in ambuscade, and appeared to wait for Zedeo's party at the corner of one of the avenues. One of them, who appeared to be their chief, and whom Giovanni perceived to be the cruel Dolgorucki, otherwise Lanfranco, approached within about two hundred yards, and lifting a speaking trumpet; which he carried in his hand, to his mouth, he apostrophized Zedeo and his party in these words—"Madmen! who has conducted you to these places?—Do you come here to seek death?—Know that whoever violates this sanctuary, is sure to pay for his rashness with his life."

Zedeo replied, that they were come in search of the Count Rosomaski and his daughter, who had been long unjustly confined, and treated with savage barbarity, in
these

these gloomy abodes; he added, that they were determined to kill all those who should attempt to throw the least obstacle in the way of their search.

"You had better think of your own unfortunate situation," said Lanfranco, "than to talk of delivering others; you will all instantly perish, for having violated the asylum of the implacable Lanfranco; of Lanfranco, the eternal persecutor of Rosomaski, his captive and victim. Once entered into these caverns, there is no getting out again."

"Fix your bayonets," said Zedeo to his soldiers, "and follow me."

They had not advanced many steps, before Zedeo remarked that Lanfranco, assisted by several accomplices, appeared to be casting off a rope, which descended from the top of the galleries, from a large iron staple ring, to which it was attached nearly at the bottom. Zedeo instantly ordered his men to halt, which was done so instantaneously, that Lanfranco and his assistants had

had not time to observe they were not quite under the suspended ruins intended for their destruction, and to delay the departure of the rope; as it slipped from their hands, a horrible crashing resounded through the arches, and there fell a deluge of fragments of rock, and heaps of earth, which would have overwhelmed the whole of Zedeo's party in an instant, if he had not penetrated the design of Lanfranco, and baffled it by a sudden manœuvre. None of them perished, although they were so near to the falling wreck, that several of them were severely bruised by some of the rolling fragments. For some minutes afterwards, there was such a cloud of dust, as almost obscured the light of their torches. They were obliged to wait till it had subsided, before they could rush towards the enemy, which the soldiers were impatient to put into execution.

When the enemy again became visible, Zedeo's party heard Lanfranco again bellowing through his speaking trumpet these words—

words—"Look; the body of Rosomaski shall serve me for a rampart; your balls will not reach me but through his body."

Giovanno recognised the unfortunate Rosomaski, heavily ironed, and behind him the execrable Lanfranco, and his numerous train of satellites, who sheltered themselves behind Rosomaski in single file. After having pronounced this horrible menace, Lanfranco ordered his followers to quit their rank two by two, to discharge their pieces, and then entrench themselves again behind Rosomaski whilst they reloaded them. The balls no sooner began to hiss about their ears, than the sons of Mars, inflamed with rage, presented their muskets, and were about to fire; but Zedeo and Giovanno threw themselves before them, and entreated them to desist, lest they should deprive the unfortunate man of life whom they came to preserve. They reminded them, that it could not be long before their comrades, who were gone round the other way, would arrive, and
take

take the enemy in the rear, when Zedeo promised them that they should take ample revenge on their cruelty and treachery, with the points of their bayonets. Whilst he was addressing the soldiers, the enemy still continued to shower the balls about them ; the report of each piece was like the explosion of a subterraneous thunder ; but they did no mischief to Zedeo's party, because the ruins which had been intended to crush them, lay between them and the enemy, and now served them as a bulwark. The soldiers, however, were so impatient to retaliate, that Zedeo and Giovanni began to dread the impetuosity of their fury ; when the generous Rosomaski, guessing at the cause of their not returning the fire, cried out with all his strength—" Fire, my friends ; fire on the dastardly Lanfranco and his accomplices. Do not mind me ; stand upon your own defence."

This generous exclamation had a sudden effect upon the brave soldiers to whom it was addressed ; they dropped their pieces, which

which were still presented, and declared that not a ball should be fired by them; but that if their comrades did not appear, the contest should be decided by the bayonet. Zedeo ordered them to shelter themselves from the balls as well as they could (which they instantly performed by covering themselves with the ruins), whilst he brought the enemy to a parley, to pass away the time till Ludowico's party should make their appearance. As Lanfranco saw that his accomplices could do no further execution, he ordered them to refrain from firing; and a solemn silence prevailed, when Zedeo, mounting on the ruins, again repeated his promise to Lanfranco, that if he would give up his prisoners unhurt, he and his men would depart. Lanfranco only replied by insulting language and menaces, that though they had been fortunate enough to escape the first torrent of his rage, they had only prolonged their lives for some few minutes. He concluded, by an oath, that he would sacrifice every one of them, and leave not one to tell the tale.

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This savage ferocity again revived the fury of the soldiers, who demanded of their commander to suffer them to return these insolent threats with their bayonets. "Let us perish in fair combat, and in avenging ourselves," said one of them, "and not remain here inactive, to be crushed with our hands in our pockets by some other infernal contrivance." At these words, all his comrades started up, and cried out—"To the charge!"—Lanfranco, who heard their cries, and saw their preparations, again roared out that if they advanced beyond the heap of ruins, Rosomaski should be the first man that fell. He then threw away his trumpet, drew his sabre, and placed himself in the attitude of putting his threat into execution.

"Why do you hesitate to avenge yourselves upon these cowards," cried Rosomaski, "whose only bravery consists in assassinating the defenceless?—Death will now be sweet to me, since I know that you will instantly retaliate upon my murderers!"

ers !—Brave soldiers ! once more I say, come on !”

The soldiers, who were again on the point of rushing forwards, like a tyger on its prey, were struck with admiration at the magnanimity of this unfortunate man, and seemed as if unable to stir. They groaned with indignation at his unworthy persecutors, and panted to preserve his life. In an instant, the scene was changed, and they beheld those who had just before threatened their lives with the most insulting menaces, falling under the bayonets of their comrades, or flying to save their own. They saw a person spring forward from an avenue, and dart like lightning towards Lanfranco. In an instant, the arm which held the threatening sabre over the head of Rosomaski, was severed from his body, and the infamous Lanfranco fell to the ground, writhing in dreadful agonies, and making horrible contortions. A discharge of musketry was then heard, and numbers of the banditti were laid on the dust, whilst the
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rest blew out their torches, and strove to seek their safety in darkness; but they were met at every turning by the slaughtering bayonet, and yielded up their unworthy lives. Zedeo's soldiers then rushed forwards, and finished what their comrades had begun. In a very few minutes only two of the banditti retained their lives; these dropped on their knees, and begged for quarter. The enraged soldiers were about to plunge their bayonets into their breasts, when they were stopped by Zedeo, who ordered them to be spared, as their lives might be necessary to the discovery of Rósomaski's daughter, who was also confined in the subterraneans. The soldiers yielded an unwilling obedience.

All eyes were now drawn towards Lanfranco, who was still writhing and groaning on the sand. Ludowico seized him by the hair, and raised up his head. Lanfranco opened his eyes, which death seemed to have already closed, and beheld the fatal dream, which had formerly occasioned
him

him so much terror, realized. The indignant Ludowico stood over him with his avenging sabre, about to send him to the fathomless abyss. The wretch had lost all hopes, and he exclaimed—"I die contented, if, at this moment, Rhodiska be the wife of Ludowico; I shall then leave to the world an ever-memorable example of vengeance."—He could say no more; the sabre of Ludowico fell, and dispatched to the furies the soul which Lanfranco had borrowed from them.

CHAP. XIV.

THE soldiers then made the caverns resound with their acclamations. Ludowico caught Rosomaski in his arms, and cried out —“ My dearest friend, take courage ; your faithful Rhodiska has escaped the last horrible snare which was laid for her, and she burns to receive you to her chaste embrace.”— At these joyful sounds, which banished all the dreadful ideas which had before damped the joy of Rosomaski at his deliverance, he returned his friend’s embrace with the utmost ardour.

“ Behold, also,” continued Ludowico, “ your generous friend, the benevolent Giovanni ; he pants to receive you to his arms.”

Giovanno

Giovanno rushed forwards, and the feeble Rosomaski no sooner beheld the well known face, than he fell on his neck.

"Let me now introduce you," continued Ludowico, "to my friend, the brave Colonel Zedeo Darnim, to whose personal aid, with that of the brave band of veterans whom he has lent us, you are indebted for the happiness which you are about to enjoy."

Zedeo received the silent embraces of the grateful Rosomaski, whose heart was too full of astonishment at his unexpected deliverance, of gratitude to his deliverers, and of happiness to hear that his Rhodiska was still his, to be able to say a word.

Ludowico and Giovanno were now impatient to restore Rosomaski to the fresh breezes of the upper regions, to which he had been long a stranger, and to continue their searches after the tender Paulina.

The two accomplices of Lanfranco, who had escaped the slaughter of their comrades, had been spared, on condition that they should

should discover the place where she was confined, and the secret haunt of Lanfranco, where they expected to find full proofs of his guilt, and the names of all his other accomplices.

Rosomaski's tottering steps not keeping pace with the impatience of Giovanni to behold his beloved Paulina, the soldiers made a kind of litter for him with their arms, and carried him to the platform.—Zedeo, with five of the soldiers, mounted it with Rosomaski, and Ludowico ordered the two prisoners, who were acquainted with the management of the machine, to put it in motion.

“Alas! my dearest friends,” cried Rosomaski, “are you going to leave me again?”

“But for a short time,” replied Giovanni; “we shall soon find your beloved daughter, and overtake you before you reach Zabno.”

The machine began to ascend, and Giovanni was obliged to restrain his impa-

tience till the platform had performed its ascent and descent, to see that their prisoners used no foul play towards their friends who were on it, and to take them with them to point out what their lives stood pledged to discover. When the machine had performed its necessary revolutions, the two prisoners began to fulfil their promises, by conducting Ludowico, Giovanno, and their party, into a sort of cabinet, not far from the spot where Lanfranco and his accomplices lay extended, and at a small distance from the apartment which Rosomaski had occupied just before. This was the cabinet where Lanfranco had usually resided, when he passed from the mines of Wielitska, his usual abode, into the Carpathian mountains, for the execution of any of his odious projects. They entered it, and perceived several papers scattered on a table, which Lanfranco, in his surprise, had not had time to conceal: on perusal, they were found chiefly to consist of notes addressed to Lanfranco, by the Jew Ishmael, Gramani,

Gramani, and others of his associates. These writings gave an ample discovery of the plan of all the plots which Lanfranco had formed against Rosomaski and his family; the engines employed to ensure their success; and the expression of the transports of joy with which every misfortune of his victims had filled his dark bosom.

“What a horrid character!” exclaimed Giovanni; “he fed only on gall, and lived only for vengeance. It was as necessary for him to hate, as it is to humane souls to love each other.”

As no place escaped their researches, they discovered a private drawer in the table, whence they drew some writings, which, to their infinite surprise, proved to be those belonging to the estates of Vistulof and Dorbalec. Those estates had been purchased by Ishmael, who acted as a secret agent for Lanfranco, and who received all the rents for him from the steward. There were other proofs that Lanfranco, after having exiled the Rosomaskis from Vistulof,

had caused their possessions to be ravaged, in order to prevent their receiving any supplies, and to compel them to part with them for a trifling consideration. All these compleat evidences of the monstrous machinations of Lanfranco having been secured, the guides conducted them into the cavern, which had so long resounded with the dolorous accents of Rosomaski.—The sensible hearts of Ludowico and Giovanni were penetrated with the most lively sensations, which seemed to have communicated themselves to the breasts of the soldiers, when they beheld these words traced on different parts of the wall—“Oh, my beloved Rhodiska! thy Rosomaski will love thee till death.”—They then visited the place of Rhodiska’s confinement, and (wonderful effect of the sympathy which reigned between this amiable pair, and of the mutual intelligence of their hearts!) the walls again presented characters traced by a hand which the heroism of conjugal fidelity guided. They read

read these words—"Oh, Rosomaski!—Oh, my well-beloved!—Thy Rhodiska would suffer a thousand deaths, rather than renounce thee!"—At this sight, a deep sentiment of admiration seized all their hearts; there was not one whose breast did not throb. Giovanni exclaimed, that in entering into those places, consecrated by misfortune and virtue, he felt himself penetrated by a religious respect, as if he had visited a sanctuary. He, however, observed that the moments were precious, and that sentiments, otherwise laudable, ought not to make them lose sight of one of the principal ends of their expedition for a moment. The soldiers declared their readiness to attend him, wherever their services might be required.

Giovanni then demanded of the prisoners in what place Rosomaski's daughter was confined? and was answered, in the work-room where the women repaired the clothes of the miners, in the mines of Wielitska.

"Has she, then, been subjected to that degrading employment?" demanded Giovanni.

The prisoners replied in the affirmative.

"Lead on then," said Giovanni; "every moment is an age till she is liberated."

They then began to trace back the gallery leading to the mines of Wielitska. After having followed the guides through several serpentine roads, forming quite a labyrinth, they reached a spacious place resembling a square. There they saw a number of workmen, who were employed in different labours; there appeared to be above one hundred together. At the sight of these hardy miners, bestowing a laborious ardour on the most unpleasant employments, far from the light of day, Giovanni and Ludowico felt themselves penetrated with a kind of esteem for them. So soon as the labourers beheld the soldiers, they desisted from their work, and rested on their tools, in evident symptoms of surprise. As Ludowico was not unacquainted

quainted with their vast numbers, he thought it would be prudent to rouse their indignation at the crimes of Lanfranco and his associates, to engage them to assist, or, at least, not to oppose their designs of liberating Paulina, and securing the remainder of Lanfranco's agents. He harangued them thus:—

“Hardy and indefatigable men! who pass your days in these gloomy abodes in the most dangerous labours, in the employment of honest industry, who lead a life free from reproach and remorse, you are not aware that these dark caverns did conceal, and do still conceal, some wretches, who, if they were not so well known, might implicate your characters in a suspicion of being partakers of their guilt.—But you, who are here present, have nothing to fear; not one of you is amongst those whom we have to accuse. Many of you, undoubtedly, know the hand-writing of Ishmael, your chief, and that of his associate, the counterfeit Dolgorucki.”

Here he read to them the written proofs of the criminal correspondence which had existed between Ishmael and Lanfranco, the pretended Dolgorucki, and of the infamous plots contrived and executed by them and their accomplices, to persecute a virtuous family. One of the workmen, the same old man who had conducted them to the entrance of the secret passage leading to the Carpathian mountains, and who, by the venerable majesty of his grey hairs, and a life spent among them, had obtained their unbounded confidence, advanced, and looking over the papers, knew the handwriting of Ishmael and Dolgorucki. In a harangue, as short as energetic, he assured his comrades of the truth of the facts which had been denounced to them by Ludowico, and he instantly impressed the minds of those who surrounded him with the same conviction. Ludowico profited by this happy disposition, to declare that Lanfranco and the greater part of his accomplices had already expiated their crimes by death,

death, and to desire them to deliver into their hands the Jew Ishmael, Gramani, Dorothea, and Zokalef, who were in the mines of Wielitska.

This discourse was applauded, and followed by acclamations which testified the indignation roused in their honest hearts by such unheard-of crimes. In a short space of time, these men spread over every part of the mines, and propagated the report of the villanies of Lanfranco and his associates among their comrades. The same clamour of indignation every where resounded; all the miners, justly enraged at the disgrace which might have been brought upon themselves, ran towards the subterraneous abode of Ishmael. As soon as they beheld him, they loaded him with imprecations; the guard who stood sentry at his door, instead of defending him, joined their comrades, and delivered Ishmael, bound, to the soldiers. Ludowico, Giovanni, and their escort, were then conducted to the work-room, where the

tender Paulina was at work, and subjected to all the insults of Dorothea, with which the latter was loading her at the very instant when the door flew open. Ludowico entered with the soldiers, but Giovanni remained behind, that his sudden appearance might not give too great a shock to the tender Paulina. Ludowico looked round the room with a stern air, to discover Paulina; but she was so disguised under her mean apparel, that he would have looked in vain, if he had not been directed towards her, by hearing her well-known voice exclaim—

“ Oh, Heaven ! it is our dear friend Ludowico ! ”

“ Leave this humiliating employment instantly, my dear Paulina,” said Ludowico.

As he was speaking, he observed a female gliding out of the room; but he stopped her, and looking at her face, which she held down, he recognised the perfidious Dorothea.

“ How ! ” cried Ludowico, “ do you
4 wish

wish to avoid paying your respects to your old acquaintance?—Take her with you, soldiers; she must have an interview with the magistrates of Cracow.”

Paulina, by this time, had precipitated herself into the arms of Ludowico, unable to speak for a long time, through her excess of joy. The first words which she uttered were—

“ Oh, my dear father and mother !”

“ They are at liberty,” said Ludowico ; “ and you are going to see them, and your long-lost brother, Ladislaus.”

Giovanno, unable to command his impatience to behold the beloved person of her whose voice he instantly recognised, had stepped a little forwards, and the lynx-eyed maiden, who instantly espied him, exclaimed—“ My Giovanno !” and fell back into the arms of Ludowico. When she resumed her senses, she saw her generous lover at her feet, and felt the ardent kisses which he imprinted on one of her hands.

“ Oh, my dearest Paulina ! what an excess of joy is this ! ”

Paulina looked at him with a most expressive tenderness ; but recollecting to how many eyes she was exposed, she only said—

“ Let us leave our congratulations, my generous friends, till we shall be in a more suitable place.”

Giovanno instantly comprehended her meaning, and to save her blushes, put a restraint on his joy. As they were retiring from the room, they beheld the other traitor, Zokalef, whom the miners had sought out, and were bringing to deliver up to the soldiers. All the accomplices of Lanfranco were now either taken or killed, except Gramani. As the soldiers quitted the Carpathian mines, they had expressed a desire to behold, in the features of death, that Lanfranco who had made himself so dreadful when living. Giovanno had employed that interval in looking at all the rest of the slain, to discover whether Gramani

mani was among them, but he was not to be found : upon enquiring of the two prisoners concerning him, they answered, that he had left the Carpathian mountains that morning, by means of the platform ; and they supposed that he would be found at his residence at Zabno.

As Ludowico was satisfied with the discoveries of the two prisoners, he gave them a proper reprimand, and suffered them to go away. Ludowico and Giovanni then distributed all the money which they had about them among the honest miners, and departed amidst their hearty acclamations. They hastened to quit the mines, and once more to enjoy the light of day. As Paulina was still in her miner's dress, they threw a cloak over her, and placed her in Ishmael's carriage. He himself, with Dorothea and Zokalef, were obliged to walk on foot, surrounded by the soldiers, and overwhelmed with the hisses and execrations of the miners, who prayed for their speedy punishment. They left the mines
by

by a circular road, which, by means of a slope skilfully managed, and almost insensible, permitted the passage of the carriage. In less than three hours, the procession reached Zabno, where they found that Zedeo and his soldiers had seized the vile Gramani in his own house. The success of the expedition was now complete.

As Rosomaski and Paulina had been prepared to meet each other, their interview was without surprise, but undescribably tender, as may be guessed from the meeting of a father and daughter, who had been long separated from, and never expected to see each other again. After the first emotions of their mutual rejoicing and tenderness were exhausted, Rosomaski expressed his ardent desire to be separated no longer from his Rhodiska, and that they should immediately set out for Cracow.— After he had been prevailed upon to suffer himself and Paulina to take that nourishment to which they had so long been strangers, and of which they stood in so much need, Rosomaski

Rosomaski and Paulina were placed in Ishmael's carriage, and left Zabno, escorted by Zedeo, Ludowico, and Giovanni, and followed by Tomaso and Gramani's late servant. The prisoners were left to the care of the soldiers, whom Rosomaski had thanked for their generous intrepidity; and Giovanni, whose joy was unbounded, and his heart as liberal as his purse was adequate to its impulse, promised each of them a recompence of fifty ducats, so soon as they arrived at Cracow, where he could supply himself with money. The brave veterans, more proud of the encomiums which were bestowed upon them, and of their having had an opportunity of signaling themselves under the eyes of their brave commander, than of the riches which they were going to enjoy, convoyed them to the end of the town of Zabno, and then sent them off under three loud buzzas.

It was nearly dusk when Rosomaski and his friends got within the walls of Cracow; Zedeo was prevailed upon by his entreaties

to

to accompany them home, and receive the grateful acknowledgments of his Rhodiska; and Zedeo was too much under the impulse of curiosity to behold so amiable a woman, to require much solicitation. The two friends, Rhodiska and Theresia, were sitting together, in one of their usual reveries, reflecting upon the fate of their dearest friends, when a carriage was heard to stop at the door, and a loud knocking thundered at the gate. Both of them instantly started up, but seemed to have lost all further motion, and even the use of the organ of speech, as they neither stirred nor spoke, but looked towards the door in silent expectation: they heard the sounds of feet on the stairs; the door opened; a person presented himself, and caused equal astonishment to both, though it originated in very opposite causes. Rhodiska was surprised at the sight of a perfect stranger, and Theresia was thunderstruck at beholding the involuntary cause of all her former sufferings, Zedeo Darnim.

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"Be not alarmed, ladies," said he; "I bring you only good news—I may add, the best of news."

Rhodiska was silent, not imagining that the news could concern her, till Zedeo, about to continue his discourse, pronounced the words—"Rosomaski and Paulina are both safe."

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Rhodiska; "what angel are you whose sounds are so enchanting to my ear?—Speak!—do not stop short; tell me where they are—when I shall see them!"

"I left them within the walls of Cracow, Madam," replied Zedeo; "and it cannot possibly be long before they greet your and their longing eyes."

Zedeo then gracefully saluted Theresia, and told her, that he was extremely happy at having had it in his power to make some little atonement for the sufferings of which he had been the involuntary cause to her, by having been, in some measure, instrumental to the happiness of her dear and amiable

amiable friends. Theresia replied, that as they could neither of them justly reproach the other with the misfortunes which they had suffered on each other's account, she should lay under a vast weight of obligation to him, and all those who had had any share in alleviating the distress of her friends.

"It is more than *alleviated*, Madam," said Zedeo; "it is at an end. The virtuous Rosomaskis will not only be re-assembled, in a few minutes, under one roof, but they will have no longer any interruption of their happiness to dread. Their principal foe, Lanfranco, has fallen under the avenging sabre of Ludowico; many of his accomplices bit the dust at the same time; and all the rest are in custody, and will sleep to-night in the prison of Cracow, whence they will depart, only to suffer the ignominious death which is due to their crimes."

Zedeo had chiefly addressed his conversation to Theresia, in order to give Rhodiska

diska time to compose herself; and he now turned to her, and asked her if she thought she could be able to support an excess of joy, with as much fortitude as she had resisted all the shocks of the most poignant grief? Rhodiska answered, that she was prepared, and anxious for the meeting.—“Well, then, Madam,” said Zedeo, “your husband and daughter are under this roof, and there is no necessity for delaying any longer to gratify your and their ardent wishes.”—As he said these words, he went out of the room, and presently returned, followed by Rosomaski, supported by Ludowico and Paulina, who held by Giovanni.

Notwithstanding the precautions which had been taken, Rhodiska was overcome, and sunk into the arms of Theresia, who, apprehending that that might be the case, had placed herself near at hand to receive her. Rosomaski endeavoured to recall her to life by the most endearing caresses; but fearing a relapse, if Rhodiska should be-
hold

hold him, instantly on regaining her senses, Theresia prevailed upon him to retire to a little distance. When Rhodiska gave signs of returning sensibility, the greatest care was taken by Theresia to calm her by degrees; but the first excess of ecstatic joy was over, and Rhodiska's natural strength of mind enabled her to receive and return the embraces of her husband and daughter, in a silent rapture, which was far more expressive than the most passionate exclamations could have been. Rosomaski, at length, recovered strength sufficient to tell Rhodiska, that it was time she should thank the intrepid and generous Zedeo, and his friends Ludowico and Giovanno, for their present happiness. Rhodiska performed this duty with an ease, grace, and fervency, which enchanted those to whom they were addressed, and who thought that one of the happiest moments of their lives, in which they had contributed to the peace and happiness of so amiable a family. When Rhodiska advanced to embrace Giovanno, and
pour

pour out to him the ardent effusions of her grateful heart, he replied, casting an expressive look at Paulina—"Amiable Rhodiska! you may save yourself the trouble of thanking me; I am already recompensed to the utmost extent of my wishes."—Rhodiska and Paulina understood him; and the former, taking a hand of each, clasped them together, and said, in a low tone—"There is now only one other addition to our happiness, which, I hope, will not be long delayed."

"If you mean by that, Madam," replied Giovanni, "the ceremony which is to make all my future happiness, it has already been too long delayed by a cruel interruption. I hope the lovely Paulina will consider what I have suffered during this dreadful interval, and defer my felicity no longer than——"

"The day after to-morrow," rejoined Rhodiska.

At that instant, young Ladislaus, who had been sent for by Theresia, entered the room,

room, and Rhodiska conducted him to Rosomaski, who received his son, then a fine boy, into his arms, and kissed him with a transport of joy. Paulina was impatient to share in his ecstasy, and could scarcely wait till Rosomaski released her brother, to lavish on him all the effusions of sisterly affection.

Rhodiska, after these fresh transports had subsided, requested to be acquainted with the circumstances which had brought about her unexpected happiness. Zedeo, Ludowico, and Giovannò, by turns, related those affairs in which they had been separately engaged, with all the modesty of brave men who were speaking of their own actions.

Zedeo then presented to Rosomaski the writings relative to Vistulof and Dorbaiec, which were now returned into his possession by a double claim : first, as being the heir-at-law of Lanfranco, who had died without issue ; and secondly, because, by the decree of the Chancery of Cracow, Lanfranco had
been

been adjudged to account to Rosomaski for all the monies which himself and his father had received from those estates, during the interval between the death of Rosomaski's father, and the time of making the decree. This account, which would have amounted to an immense sum, had never been settled; and the money due from Lanfranco to Rosomaski, was considerably more than what the latter had received when he sold the estates. There was no room, therefore, for the delicacy of Rosomaski, to hesitate at considering himself as the undoubted proprietor of those still revered spots, which had been the possessions of his and Rhodiska's ancestors, and the scenes of moments of unspeakable happiness to themselves, in spite of the horrible misfortunes with which they had been so strangely chequered.

The mutual attachment of Rhodiska and Rosomaski, and the happiness which the two young lovers, Paulina and Giovanni, were going to enjoy, brought the conversation

sation insensibly on the subject of the bliss derived from conjugal love. If, at that moment, the company had observed the eyes of the beautiful Theresia, they would have seen that they shone with a more than usual vivacity. The hour of repose at length put an end to these interesting conversations, and sent them to their undisturbed reflections.

The next morning, Rosomaski went out to appear with Zedeo before the magistrates of Cracow, and lay before them the accusations against Ishmael, Gramani, Dorothea, and Zokalef. Rhodiska, who had concerted her plan, sent to desire the presence of Ludowico, in a retired room. As soon as he appeared, she addressed him in these words:—

“ Our friend Ludowico knows how ardently Rosomaski and myself long for his happiness; we are convinced that it cannot be compleat, until the energies of love as well as of friendship are called into action. We have another friend, who, we think,

think, would render any addition to Ludowico's happiness unnecessary. We know that that other friend will find her felicity in Ludowico; you must guess whom I allude to; you cannot be insensible to the virtues of Theresia; she is all alive to yours. Need I say more?"

Ludowico was some moments without making any reply. He was deliberating within himself whether he should avow to Rhodiska that he was not unacquainted with the favourable sentiments which Theresia entertained for him; but he was afraid of her reproaching him with having kept it concealed from her. He determined to try whether Rhodiska had been made the confidant of Theresia.

"Madam," replied he, "I am in no doubt of the friendship which yourself and Rosomaski honour me with; but how can I flatter myself that your friend, whose sentiments have ever been so opposite to your wishes, could have changed them in my favour?"

"These mistaken ideas of my friend have, I believe, given way to maturer reason," said Rhodiska: "but here she comes; I will put the question to herself, and I have no doubt she will confess her errors with her usual frankness."

Theresia at that moment had entered the room in search of her friend, whom she had missed finding in her own apartment.

"My dear Theresia," continued Rhodiska, "my friend Ludowico and myself have had a little argument on your account, and you are come in time to decide between us. He imagines that your heart is still insensible to the tender passion, and I maintain the contrary; which of us is in the right?"

Theresia was seized with an emotion which she could not conceal; her lips quivered; her eyes were downcast, and she could not speak.

"Come, come, my dearest Theresia!" added Rhodiska, "it is nobler to confess that we have been in an error than to endeavour to conceal it. Confess that you
now

now think that there are men who are worthy of all our confidence and tenderness."

"I will confess," replied Theresia, gaining courage, and endeavouring to assume a sportive air, "that I have witnessed one such example in your Rosomaski; but one should stand very little chance in a lottery which has only one prize to so many thousands of blanks. Have you never heard the opinion of one of their own sex, a French writer, on the subject?"

"Not that I remember," replied Rhodiska.

"It is this:—

*Où peut on trouver des amans,
Qui nous soient à jamais fidelles ?
Il n'en est que dans les romans,
Ou dans les nids des tourterelles.'*

"Poetry, my dear Theresia," replied Rhodiska, "you know is only fiction, agreeably wrapt up; do let us descend to humble prose."

"I tell you," said Theresia, "that I am convinced, by your case, that the poet has stretched a point."

"And I presume," replied Rhodiska, "that you would not be sorry to find, by your own case, that he has stretched two points. I am well assured, if you were to make the trial, our friend Ludowico would convince you of it."

"I should make it the sole aim of my life, adorable Theresia!" said Ludowico, taking one of her hands, and pressing it to his lips, "to erase the unfavourable impressions which you have imbibed against our sex. If the sole possession of my heart——"

"Oh, my dear friends," cried Rhodiska, interrupting him, "I read in both your looks that your attachment is reciprocal; why then any longer hesitate to avow it?—Do you fear to render your common friend too happy, by giving her hopes of seeing you blessed in each other?—My dear Theresia! it is to you especially that I address

I address myself, let that secret which you have so long concealed, now be revealed. Pardon me for having betrayed it; but I see myself forced to it by your reserve, and my excessive tenderness for you. It is time that you should discard that restraint which proves the elevation of your soul, but should not be an eternal bar to your happiness. Be proud of the sentiment which attaches you to Ludowico; virtue is alone worthy to attract virtue. No longer dread to pronounce that word so delicious to the ear of a lover."

"Adorable Theresia!" cried Ludowico, throwing himself at her feet, "can I have been so happy as to have obtained a favourable regard from you?—Have I, who imagined that no mortal was worthy of obtaining your consent to his addresses, (through delicacy he avoided mentioning the discovery which chance had presented to him)—have I, who should never have dared to elevate my views to you, been able to inspire you with some interest in

my behalf!—What the amiable and brave Zedeo had never been able to effect, may I hope that I have accomplished!—I love—I adore you!—my whole life shall be one continued endeavour to make you a return for so much felicity.”

Ludowico again pressed the trembling hand of Theresia to his lips; and she, in her emotion, rather fell than seated herself in a chair which was at hand. She cast a look of tenderness at Ludowico; gave a sigh, which announced that love had prevailed over her scrupulous constraint, and said—

“All disguise is useless; Ludowico, our friend Rhodiska has discovered to you my sentiments, and my weakness.”

Ludowico's transports were wrought into enthusiasm by this ingenuous confession; and Rhodiska enjoyed the sight, even to tears.

“My dear friend,” said she, “this day crowns my happiness. Oh, Ludowico! I entrust you with the destiny of my tenderest

dearest friend; realize the wishes which I have ever formed for her happiness. Oh, Theresia! behold our preserver and yours; acquit, for your friend, that sacred debt, which the happiest event has put it out of her own power to discharge. My worthy friends, since your hearts are come to an understanding, pledge your faith to each other, and make me the depository of your reciprocal obligation, till it can be consecrated at the altar. To-morrow, the marriage of my Paulina and the worthy Giovanni will take place. Let the same day witness the union of two such happy couples."

Those affectionate exhortations of Rhodiska had the desired effect; and the two lovers pronounced their vows before her. This affecting scene was soon interrupted by the return of Rosomaski, whose satisfaction equalled his astonishment, when he was acquainted with the approaching union of the generous Ludowico with the beautiful Theresia.

On the next day, the two weddings were celebrated. Rosomaski, with the consent of Rhodiska, presented Giovanni and Paulina with the castle of Dorbalec, and Ludowico and Theresia took up their residence with Rhodiska and Rosomaski, at Vistulof; so that only a short distance separated these happy and virtuous personages.

Dorothea, Gramani, and Zokalef, were convicted of their enormous crimes, and paid the forfeit of them by an ignominious death. Ishmael was pardoned, at the intercession of Rhodiska, whom he had been the means of delivering, though from very unworthy motives. He was, however, deprived of his directorship of the mines of Wielitska, which the government, convinced how dangerous it was to confide to an individual so vast an undertaking, and which might be converted to such monstrous purposes, would never farm again. Ishmael, however, was very well satisfied, as, by the death of Lanfranco, he

he had acquitted himself of the vast sums which he had borrowed from him.

The castles of Vistulof and Dorbalec once more became the seats of mirth, happiness, and hospitality. Rhodiska and Rosomaski left behind them a fame which more than a century has not been able to efface; and at this day, whatever curious traveller visits the stupendous ruins of Vistulof, and makes any enquiries about them, is answered:—

“That was once the residence of the magnanimous and virtuous Rosomaski and Rhodiska!”

THE END.

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